

The Last Milestone

Essays by

F.W. Boreham

DR. FRANK W. BOREHAM-THE MAN
AND THE WRITER

HERE was a man for whom life never lost the halo of wonder-that is the abiding impression of my long friendship with Frank Boreham. What a relish he had for living and how vastly he enjoyed being alive! He was interesting because he was interested in everybody and everything.

His forty books won for him a multitude of friends across the seven seas. But the man himself was greater than all that he wrote. His books were only the 'fancies that broke through language and escaped'.

There was more in him than could be uttered in one lifetime. 'If there is anything in the doctrine of reincarnation,' he said, 'I intend to spend at least one of my future spans of existence as a novelist, working up into thrilling romances the plots that I have collected in the course of my life as a minister.'

There was a Dickensian quality in his mind, a quickness to sense the possibilities of a story, a situation or a scene. But the chief charm of his books lies in their rich veins of autobiography. Pick up one of them and you will not read far before striking some personal experience, confession or adventure. He poured himself into his writing. When the French King Henry III told Montaigne that he liked his books, the essayist replied: 'I am my books.' So it was with Frank Boreham.

His work is distinguished by a quiet insight, a gentle humour, a homely philosophy and a charming literary grace, but supremely he was a man with a message. He wrote because he had something to say.

When he was a baby in arms his mother took him for a walk on a summer afternoon along the Southborough Road out of Tunbridge wells. She rested awhile on a seat in the shade of a hedge. A gipsy caravan came along and trudging beside it was a wrinkled old crone. Catching sight of the

mother with her baby, she hobbled across to the seat. Lifting the white veil she looked into the child's face, and holding the tiny hand she said in a husky voice: 'Put a pen in his hand and he'll never want for a living.'

He was a born teller of stories, with a perennial freshness and an ingenious, inventive, imaginative mind. He was scarcely out of school when he began sending articles to London papers and magazines. Had he kept to his youthful ambition to be a journalist he would have been a first-rate interviewer. It was amazing what he drew out of unlikely people.

When you met him you were impressed by his quietness, modesty and fine courtesy. There was no hint that here was a writer and preacher with a world reputation. His gentle, sensitive face seemed rather shy but became expressive as he talked. His voice was clear and kindly, with a lingering Kentish flavour.

If the word 'genius' may be used of him, it should be applied in the realm of friendship. You find it in his many essays on John Broadbanks, but he bestowed it upon a host of people, indeed he offered it to everybody he met. As a brother minister he was an apostle of encouragement and as a pastor he had a rare skill in the art of comforting.

To know him was to love him. He went through life scattering benedictions. I never heard him say an unkind or a mean thing about anybody. He did not attack people, always maintaining that the best way of proving that a stick is crooked is to lay a straight one beside it. 'People want helping and you don't help them by scolding them.'

I do not remember his name being associated with any controversy. With Pundamentalist, with High Church and Evangelical, with Roman Catholic and Protestant, he had no discernible quarrel. With true catholicity of spirit he moved among them with the easy grace of a man who picked flowers from all their gardens.

Early on, Sir Robertson Nicoll raised the question in the *British Weekly* as to whether it was as easy as it looked to write in Boreham's style. But the truth was that the apparent

ease with which he wrote was only seeming, for what appeared to be spontaneous was the result of sustained hard work.

Every morning he was in his study at eight o'clock writing down every idea and fancy and experience that came to him. They might not appear in sermons or articles for years, but he accumulated a vast store of material on which he drew as he needed it. His fingers itched to write, and he loved to have **a pen in his** hand. He always **revelled** in writing and he could not stay his hand even when he tried. When he told me that *The Passing of John Broadbanks* would be his last book, I smiled. It was not long before another volume appeared with the title *I Forgot to Say*, and he kept on remembering themes he had forgotten through half a dozen more books.

For all his understanding, he was incapable of understanding why a man should dictate to a secretary or-worse still-use a typewriter. His clear, flowing handwriting never made a compositor swear. Until he was an old man he refused to have a telephone in the house, maintaining that he could not have accomplished all he did if there had been the constant interruptions of phone calls.

Many a man envied his dispatch, his punctual attention to affairs so that he was never overwhelmed. And yet he seemed to be leisurely, and his methodical habits reminded me of Beau **Brummel's** definition of a well-dressed **man**—so well-dressed that you do not notice it.

His essays were grown-not manufactured. A story, an idea, a fancy came to him and he quickly captured it with his pen. Then, in living and reading, a host of associated ideas gathered round it until the theme ripened in his mind..

Look, for example, at his essay on 'Strawberries and Cream'. Strawberries are delicious. Cream is also very nice. **But it is strawberries and cream that make an irresistible appeal. He muses on that unrecorded yet fateful day when some** audacious dietetic adventurer took the cream from his dairy and poured it on the strawberries from his garden, and discovered with delight that the whole was greater than the sum of its parts. Then you see the idea growing that things are

enhanced by being brought together. Away he goes writing of husband wife; William and Dorothy Wordsworth; new potatoes **and** mint. Maybe it took years for all these ideas to grow together in his mind.

Read his paper on 'Dominoes'. He begins by telling how he was unexpectedly invited to have a game of dominoes. Now dominoes, he sees, stand for sympathy-the game is to match your neighbour's piece-and one of the delightful things about **life** is that the most unlikely people are found to play at dominoes. Working out this thesis he instances **one** of O. Henry's whimsicalities, in which a burglar, on discovering that his victim, like himself, is liable to rheumatism, drops his nefarious intention, and eagerly discusses symptoms and remedies with the astonished householder-in short, they play at dominoes. A sequence of illustrations, each piercing deeper into the heart of the subject, follows this opening until we come to Paul, the master of dominoes, who knew how to become all things to all men, and to One greater than Paul. Finally, he tells how a woman missionary showed a hundred magic lantern slides to a gathering of Japanese mothers. Not a f-licker of response did she **find** until at last she threw on the sheet the picture of Christ toiling with His Cross. Instantly, the room was alive with interest and quick tears flowed. They felt that here was One who had suffered as they **suffered**, One whose deep and terrible experience answered to their own. These Japanese mothers felt that the scene fitted their lives as key fits **lock**, as glove fits hand, as domino fits domino.

The discerning can see how the idea suggested by the dominoes came first, how he then read O. Henry by the fire-side, and so **on** until he lighted on the **missionary** story. The ideas grew together over a period until he gathered them all in the essay.

The essays would appear at intervals in a succession of newspapers and magazines to which he contributed. Then, after much revision, they were prepared for a book. But even then the book would be ready and under critical observation for two or more years before it went to the publisher.

Near the end, on the day his son drove him to the Royal

Melbourne Hospital, Dr. **Boreham** first took him into the study and entrusted to him a bundle of articles-enough to supply the editors of the various papers for which he wrote for six months! Was there ever such a man?

Although his style was his own, he confessed the lasting influence that Mark Rutherford had upon him. His earlier tendency to glittering alliteration mellowed into a graceful, engaging style. There was an exuberance about his adjectives and he always had more than he could use. A man's adjectives are often more characteristic than his nouns. His nouns are names for common objects which he is more or less forced to use; his adjectives are the distinguishing marks he places upon them, and reveal his individuality. There is much to be learned of the spirit of Frank **Boreham** from a study of his adjectives.

Always he kept his values adjusted, and the evangelist was never lost in the genial fireside essayist. John Wesley's Journal had a permanent place on his desk, and day by day he travelled through the year with the great itinerant who was ever about his Master's business.

Frank **Boreham** preached a great Gospel. There was fancy and artistry, but all his paths led to the Cross. The preacher of small subjects is doomed, he said. 'The pulpit is the place for magnificent verities. It is the home of immensities, infinities, eternities. We must preach more upon the great texts of Scripture; we must preach on those tremendous passages whose vastnesses almost terrify us as we approach them.'

One day he tossed over to me a tart letter from a woman commanding him to preach the Gospel. She was apparently misled by one of his intriguing titles. All who heard Frank **Boreham** knew full well that, however far away on the circumference he began, he always came to the very heart of the Gospel. The letter hurt him and I advised him to consign it to the waste-paper basket and forget it. 'I have, already answered it,' he said. 'I wrote and told her that I appreciated her concern for the preaching of Christ's Gospel and asked her to pray for me that I may be a faithful minister of the Word.'

As I have already mentioned, he had no secretary to handle the considerable flow of letters that came into his box from many lands. Each letter was answered expeditiously, either briefly on a post card or at length, as it deserved.

When asked whether he found his main satisfaction as a writer or a preacher, without any hesitation he answered, 'As a preacher and a minister. Of course,' he added quickly, 'it is like asking a man which of his two children he loves best! I glory in my pulpit-the greatest moments of my life have been spent there-but I am scarcely less fond of my pen. I do not like to choose between them. I want to be a preacher and a scribbler to the end of the chapter.' He was more interested in souls than subjects.

He browsed among many books, but the atmosphere he breathed was of one Book. You set out with him and he lured you through pleasant valleys, plucking flowers by the way, but he never mistook the by-path meadow for the King's high road, and finally he led you to the uplands of God. In his preaching he worked from the surface of a text to its deep heart.

'I have been on a visit to the uttermost star' is the exciting beginning of an essay, but before he is through he has you listening to the Good Shepherd telling: 'A bruised reed shall He not break: a smoking lamp shall He not quench.'

Emma Herman, the mystic, said after hearing him preach, that there was something about his treatment of a theme that was reminiscent of the great Dutch manner of painting which, by the magic play of light and shade, can make a peasant's kitchen romantic as a fairy palace.

When in 1936 he was invited to address the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh, the Moderator, Professor David Lamont, introduced him as 'the man whose name is on all our lips, whose books are on all our shelves, and whose illustrations are in all our sermons'-which recalls the vicar who was heard to say that he hoped he would never meet Boreham for he would be ashamed to look him in the face because he had preached so many of his sermons!

No man can be at the top of his form in every line that trickles from his pen. The clock only strikes twelve twice a day. In writing thousands of essays a man must sometimes fall below his standard of attainment. Nobody knew better than he that it was so in his case. The high standards he set for himself kept him critical of his own work. He would try and try again, but sometimes he failed and there must be a pile of essays which he did not regard as worth a place in his books.

He found it good to form a set of friendships outside the circle in which he habitually moved, and his other great interest, after preaching and writing, was revealed in an illuminating sentence: 'I only miss a cricket match when the house is on fire.' No member of the Melbourne Cricket Club was more regularly in his place than he. He loved the game and found it a perfect holiday. When he went to the beach or the bush his mind chased quarries for **sermons** or articles, but watching cricket he forgot everything but runs and wickets.

On nights when sleep was hard to come by, instead of counting sheep he would replay cricket matches in his mind. Lying awake in the darkness, he saw again the green oval 'fanned by the balmy breath of summer and fragrant with the peculiar but pleasant odour of the turf'. He relived the fluctuations and fortunes of the game and thus, so long as he remained awake, remained awake pleasantly, and in the process generated a state of mind in which it was easy to fall asleep.

His royalties must have **been** considerable, but he gave much of his income away. I learned, for example, in one of his unguarded moments, that he provided the capital cost to establish a **Mission Dispensary** with **wards at Birisiri** in Eastern Bengal and had given a capital sum for its maintenance. But it was unusual for anyone to discuss **anything** about his gifts. In the spirit of generosity, he followed the admonition: 'Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand **doeth**.' He knew that the best way to do good is not to tell anyone—not even oneself.

He had little stomach for committees, but he served for years on the Baptist Mission Board.

Dr. **Boreham** usually sported a flower in his buttonhole, but riding into Melbourne one day on a crowded tram he realized that he had forgotten it. In **Swanston** Street, a large, lame old lady climbed on board with **difficulty** and all eyes turned to the bunch of golden wattle she carried. It was in the winter month of July and the sight of the bright blossom was like the promise of sunshine on a rainy day. As she alighted a few streets further on she plucked off a handful of lovely blossom and gave it to a newspaper boy. He took them without a word of thanks, and while she watched the tram beginning to move he tossed it on the floor. Dr. **Boreham** was horrified. Diving down among the feet of the passengers he rescued it and asked the boy, 'Don't you want it?' 'No,' he muttered contemptuously, 'what's the good?' So Dr. **Boreham** stuck it in his own buttonhole and wore it proudly. All that afternoon people remarked on the wattle. 'The wattle's out!' said one with brightening face. 'Like the breath of spring!' said another. The posy sang to everyone he met of the coming spring. He thought of the woebegone face of the old lady as she stood looking after the vanishing car. She had tried to do a nice thing, and although her gift had been thrown away she had succeeded.

At many a gathering of ministers Dr. **Boreham** told this incident and warmed the hearts of his hearers. Though love's **labour** often seemed lost, he said, it had **results** that would surprise them. Lift up your hearts!

Characteristically, Dr. **Boreham** used to say that he was born on the day when bells pealed across **Europe** announcing the dramatic termination of the France-Prussian War. That was March 3, 1871.

His education at the local school was **plain** and practical, and he became a clerk in the office of a nearby brickworks. There he had an accident which left him **with** a limp through all his days.

Three months before he was seventeen he went up to London in answer to an advertisement and joined the **office** staff

of the South London Tramways Company. Proficiency in shorthand, which he had mastered during his convalescence in Tunbridge Wells, brought him quick promotion. The office years were, he always said, of incalculable importance. He learned to be methodical, to be systematic in the handling of correspondence, and to be courteous, tactful and discreet in handling people.

The impact of London on his young spirit was the turning point of his life. London appalled him. He stood one day under the shadow of St. Paul's, shivering in the crowd at his own utter loneliness. Amid the hops and clover and the orchards of his native Kent he could shout as he wished and never a soul would hear him. That was a tranquil loneliness in which he revelled, but the loneliness of the surging crowd seemed intolerable.

In those first days in London there fastened on his mind a conviction that he needed Something or Someone to nerve him to live in London to some purpose, and in that mood of wistfulness his situation dramatically changed. There in his solitude, he said, 'Christ laid His mighty hand upon me and made me His own.' He could not recall any sermon or book, any minister or missionary, any church or society that played any part in this vital experience which changed his life.

The young Christian became acquainted with a group of city missionaries whose friendship fortified and energized the new life that had sprung up within him. They took him to their mission halls and their open-air meetings, sometimes inviting him to speak. Then in the late summer of 1890 he went with them to Brenchley in Kent to work and witness among the hop-pickers. He always said that was the most delightful holiday he ever had in England. Through those soft September days he revelled in the charming old village, the rambles through the poppy-splashed fields and through woods showing their first autumn tints. But his most vivid memory was of the great tent in which the missionaries held their evening meetings. The appeals for personal decision—'woingly persuasive but never tediously protracted'—

to say so. But on the way to post the letter he met a leading Hobart bookseller who asked if he had sent the manuscript. 'Yes,' he replied, 'and here's my answer.' When he had told the whole story, the bookseller asked if the Publishing House would be likely to offer his firm the same terms. The upshot was that the first letter was destroyed and another written. The same offer was made to the bookseller. *The Luggage of Life* appeared, and Boreham was launched upon his career as a writer. Every year thereafter he brought forth a new book which went through edition after edition and sold by the hundreds of thousands. Dr. Sharp once made the interesting remark to me that Boreham was the Publishing House's 'greatest catch' since John Wesley's day.

In June 1916 he accepted the invitation to the Armadale Church. Armadale is an attractive suburb of Melbourne between the river Yarra and Port Phillip. His great preaching—attractive, interesting and evangelistic—drew crowds of eager hearers. Trams and trains set down a constant stream of people bound for Dr. Boreham's church. Some of them became members, others were inspired to be more devoted members of their own Churches, all were confirmed in the Faith. Dr. Boreham became a spiritual power in the life of Melbourne and, indeed, throughout Australia.

A Bunch of Everlastings carries this dedication: 'At the Feet of Those Three Elect Ladies, the Churches at Mosgiel, Hobart and Armadale, I desire, with the Deepest Affection and Respect, to lay this Bunch of Everlastings.'

Retirement in 1928 did not close but extended his ministry. 'I must preach!' he wrote to me urgently when he left Armadale, and Churches everywhere welcomed him. He liked to think of himself as a kind of shuttle, going to and fro between the Churches, weaving them close:: to each other.

Through all the ministering years, he was loved and companioned by the lady-Stella Cottee—whose love he had won during his student pastorate at the village of Theydon Bois in Epping Forest. She was not out of her teens when she voyaged alone across the world to become the first mistress of the Mosgiel Manse. Her quiet grace and lovely serenity,

blended with good sense, imaginative thoughtfulness and steadfast courage, inspired and sustained, protected and defended him, and smiled away his fears. He knew more than all of us how much she gave to make him the man we admired and loved. They walked and worked together and she was beside him on 'the long last mile'. This must be said of him—that he was at his brightest and best with his wife and children around him in the blessed peace of his home.

Frank Boreham had his share of sorrows, but they were never wasted sorrows, for 'aye the dew of sorrow were lustered by His love'.

He needed no honours, but his friends rejoiced when McMaster University conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1928 and Queen Elizabeth made him an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1954.

The man whom Billy Graham wanted to meet in Australia above all others was F. W. Boreham. So one fine summer morning I drove him out to Wroxton Lodge in Kew overlooking the valley of the river Yarra. It was a day to remember—the young evangelist greeting the revered old minister in his 88th year.

Dr. Boreham's mind was alert as ever, and as we settled down he said pointedly: 'What interests me in you, Dr. Graham, is the way in which you preach. You break all the laws of oratory and yet you succeed. We were always taught to begin quietly and slowly, winning interest, developing an argument, gathering force and proceeding to a climax. But you begin with a climax and sustain it.'

Dr. Graham smilingly explained that he had listened to speakers in pulpits and on platforms, studied them on the radio and television, and had come to the conclusion that with people who were listening and viewing in their homes it was necessary to win them in the first two minutes.

I coaxed Dr. Boreham to tell Dr. Graham some of his best stories—particularly his memories of Dwight L. Moody with his rugged personality like a volcano in ceaseless eruption, a miracle of tireless energy with his flaming evangelism and zeal for souls.

Chapter 1

THE FOREST AND THE TREES

THERE is no business quite as interesting as other people's business. At this point, we are **hopelessly** illogical. The frontier at which impertinence ends, and at which legitimate inquiry begins, has never been scientifically defined. Suppose, for example, that, screened by his curtains, Smith spends a good deal of his time in observing the activities of his neighbour, Brown. Smith likes to know at what precise hour Brown rises, how he regulates his domestic affairs and at what time he retires at night. If Brown goes out, Smith, inspecting his friend's attire, hazards a **conjecture** as to whether he is intent on business, golf or a social function. **If**, on the contrary, Brown remains within doors, Smith speculates, on the strength of such evidence as presents itself, as to what he is doing and why.

If, by some mischance, Smith's sleuth-like investigations are discovered, he is bluntly informed that his inquisitive behaviour is a piece of abominable impudence; that he is a contemptible busybody, that he should be heartily ashamed of himself; and that, in future, he had better mind his own business. If, however, Smith displays a lively interest, not in one neighbour, but in fifty thousand, he is applauded as an excellent citizen. And **if**, taking a continent as the field of his research, he pries into the affairs of fifty million neighbours, he is saluted as an economist, a sociologist, perhaps even a philanthropist, and the whole world echoes with his praise.

We find our first clue to a solution of the problem in the suggestion that Smith's interest in Brown may not be as offensive to Brown as Brown pretends. We like our neighbours and friends to pay us some attention. The advertisements of Births, Marriages and Deaths indicate that most people like their private business to become public property.

In the realm of literature we all emulate Smith. A good biographer, for example, must be a clever gossip. It is the glory of **Boswell** that he reveals to us all the grotesque mannerisms, the elephantine oddities and the crude tastes of Dr. Johnson. Macaulay praised him for telling us all about the great man's appetite for veal pie, his thirst for tea, his trick of touching the posts as he walked, his mysterious practice of treasuring up scraps of orange peel and so forth.

Similarly, it is the glory of **Lockhart—Boswell's** only rival—that he tells us what Sir Walter Scott ate for breakfast, what he said to his dogs, what he wore when he set off in the rain for **Melrose** and how he looked on all sorts of occasions and in all kinds of circumstances. In this virile and graphic manner every sentence of the monumental work is drafted. Defoe, too, **humours** this weakness of ours. He tells us exactly how many biscuits Crusoe ate, how he built his raft, and what the parrot talked about. Goethe insists that this intimate element is the very essence of history; and Carlyle, under Goethe's guidance, so magnified the grandeur of the individual that Mazzini told him bluntly that he could never see the forest for the trees.

It is, of course, the trees that make the forest. One cannot survey the spacious days of great Elizabeth save by conjuring up the monumental figures of Drake and Raleigh and Shakespeare; our naval traditions become incarnate in the electric personality of Nelson; the drama of the West stands crystallized in Washington and Lincoln. There is no phase of history, ancient or modern, that cannot be summoned to the mind, in dramatic and **colourful** vividness, by the mention of some impressive and well-remembered name.

Or take the Bible. On opening it, one is immediately arrested by the striking fact that, whilst other sacred literatures are concerned with nebulous dogmas and philosophical subtleties, this volume presents a ceaseless pageant of human records. One palpitating life story, in all its naked humanism, follows upon the heels of another. Biography succeeds biography, and when we approach the inner shrine of the venerable revelation, we confront, not a manifesto, nor a mandate,

nor a general design for living, but a radiant and sublime personality, so lovable, so magnetic and so compelling that it stands without a rival among the archives of mankind.

Chapter 2

LIFE'S LANDMARKS

DRIVING along the highway, a motorist carefully notes the milestones as he passes them; but it is not the milestones that rush pleasantly back upon his memory when he holds his journey in review. After all, the milestones are not particularly picturesque and they are so meticulously equidistant as to become monotonous. But the old man kangaroo that squatted beside the giant-gum where the roads forked; the pair of wise old owls that perched upon the slanting fingerpost; the kookaburras laughing their heads off on the telegraph wire; the golden-haired little girl in red who, on a pony that was obviously enjoying the fun as much as his happy young rider, was galloping home from school; these are the things that he loves to recall when all thought of the stolid milestones has faded from his mind.

Civilization passed a notable milestone on the day on which European sailors caught the first glimpse of the American coastline; on the day on which *Paradise Lost* was published; on the day on which the first message was electrically flashed from continent to continent; on the day on which the first surgical operation was painlessly performed. History has proudly inscribed these epoch-making dates on indelible record. They deserve to be noted, as the milestones deserve to be noted.

But what of the day on which the imagination of Columbus was first fired by the thought of his stupendous enterprise? Of the day on which Milton conceived the idea of a massive epic concerning a war among archangels? Of the day on which the significance of dots and dashes first occurred to Samuel Morse? Of the day on which James Simpson first dreamed of putting his patients to sleep whilst he applied the knife? These are history's most notable though invisible milestones.

In much the same way, the pilgrimage of every man is punctuated by events and experiences that, figuring in no official register, stand out in his memory as the most vital and formative happenings of his career. Our real red-letter days are seldom the days that we celebrate with feasts and frolics; they are the days of which the Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths takes no cognisance. The day on which a happy young couple realize that they are soon to become parents at least rivals in emotional intensity and excitement the day on which the child is eventually born; yet, whilst the State very properly insists that the latter event must be formally and promptly and indelibly registered, the date of the romantic discovery that caused such delighted perturbation is allowed to sink into oblivion.

We make much of wedding anniversaries, silver weddings, golden weddings, diamond weddings and the like, and nobody is likely to quarrel with the amiable and time-honoured customs. But Charles Kingsley observed the sixth of July as the great day of his year. It was the day on which he first beheld his wife's face. That, he used to say, was his real wedding-day. Richard Jefferies, who, from boyhood, loved every living thing so much that he hated to pull the trigger of his gun, tells how this realm of beauty was still further enhanced for him when he looked upon the lady who afterwards became his wife. He spends whole pages in describing the richer colour of the flowers, the deeper blue of the sky and the way in which the very earth seemed to be enamelled beneath her feet. Yet such days figure in no official register. The phenomenon has its spiritual counterpart. Life holds no two experiences more alike as to their intrinsic nature, as to the emotions they awaken, and as to their effects on personal character than the experience known as falling in love and the experience known as conversion. When Dante describes the impact on his whole being of his love for Beatrice, he entitles the passage *Vita Nuova*, the 'New Life'. Such milestones, whether emotional or spiritual, are invisible; but they are the milestones that matter most.

THE LINK AND THE CHAIN

FEW laws are more familiar ~~than~~ the law by which the entity of the tree is lost in the immensity of the forest. Statesmen, and other leaders of public life, are confronted by the problem every day. In appealing for a concerted effort, it is the easiest thing in the world to lay your case convincingly before one man; it is the hardest thing in the world to appeal effectively to that same man when you meet him as one in a million.

A public speaker fancies that he has achieved the height of his ambition when, by the spell of his oratory, he is able to attract the crowd. As a matter of fact, it is at this very point that his trouble begins. For a crowd is an embarrassment unless you know how to analyse and dissect it. A lawyer cannot deal with clients in crowds; a doctor cannot deal with patients in crowds; and, faced by a crowd, a speaker is just as helpless. The crowd can applaud and cheer and display many forms of mass hysteria; but it is only to the extent to which the orator has convinced and influenced each individual constituting that crowd that any effective result has been achieved.

A crowd has no conscience to be stirred, no heart to be broken, no soul to be saved. The man who stands before a crowd can only hope to succeed so far as he knows how to disentangle the individual from the multitude. Like the stockman who, riding into a mob of cattle, swiftly and cleverly separates from its fellows the animal that he requires, the man who deals with crowds must acquire the secret of segregating the individual. A public speaker likes to see a singing sea of faces, just as an angler likes to feel that his line is surrounded by a perfect shoal of fish; it enhances his chance of catching, in quick succession, first one fish and then another; but that is as far as it goes. To an orator, the crowd is simply the multiplied opportunity of individual conquest.

The task is a supremely **difficult** one. Lost in a crowd, the individual is as elusive as the pimpernel. We recall Oliver Wendell Holmes's famous story of the attempt to make the inhabitants of the earth audible to the dwellers on the moon. It was thought that if the entire population of this planet shouted in perfect unison, the moonmen would probably hear and reply. For a year the most elaborate organization was brought into being to secure the precise synchronization of earth's countless voices. But, when the fateful moment arrived, each individual was so anxious to hear the volume of sound emitted by the screaming millions that the appointed period proved to be a spasm of such tense silence as the world had never before known. The element of communal consciousness had entirely eliminated all sense of personal responsibility.

The problem invades even the loftiest realms. The **two** tiny patients, in Tennyson's 'Children's Hospital', urged to pray, could not understand how heaven, with so much to see to, could be concerned about the heartbreak of waifs like themselves. And John Ridd, the redoubtable hero of *Lorna Doone*, confronted a similar perplexity. With his love-affairs hopelessly entangled, he strode along those picturesque Devonshire lanes reflecting on something that he had heard about a Kindly Light that led amidst the encircling gloom of such confusions. All at once, the stars shone out; 'but,' he says, 'they shed no light on my dilemma, but only set me wondering how He who leads those heavenly hosts, **marshalling** them in perfect order and rhythmic harmony, could find time for a pump fool like me'. We have all been afflicted, at some time or other, with such suspicions.

The children in Tennyson's hospital and the distracted lover in Blackmore's leafy lane failed to recognize the essential difference between immensity and infinity. The former has limits, the latter has none. If the Creator of the Universe is not only immense but **infinite**, then no stick or stone in the solar system can lie beyond his **cognisance**, no sparrow can fall to the ground without his notice. George Macdonald used to say that, unless the very hairs of one's head are numbered, there

is no God. It is vital, especially in these days, that all men should feel that, on the highest plane, the individual is never lost in the crowd; the forest is never allowed to obscure the trees.

TELLING THE TRUTH

ANYBODY who feels in the mood to bisect humanity will find that it consists of two almost equal parts. There are the Idealists and there are the Realists. When the Realists get together, as they often do, they solemnly admonish one another to ignore the utterances of the Idealists; it is all too good to be true; the Idealist walks with his head in the clouds. When, on the other hand, the Idealists foregather, as they often do, they agree to waste no time on the work of the Realists; it is all too true to be good; the Realist walks so closely with the actual and the factual that he has lost his appetite for romance.

Gradually, however, the Idealists have come to recognize that there is more poetry in reality than they had supposed. Once upon a time our painters confined their attention to gorgeous sunsets, panoramic landscapes, laughing-eyed children and lovely women. They told us, that is to say, that beautiful things are beautiful, a fact that we more than half suspected. Then, almost simultaneously, two babies were born, John Constable and Joseph Turner, who took it into their heads to prove that lots of things are exquisitely beautiful whose beauty had been cunningly camouflaged.

Constable led in the new age. 'Give me,' he cried, 'leafless willows, old rotten planks, slimy posts and crumbling brick-work; I love such things and want to paint them!' The pontiffs protested that such work was too true to be good; but, loyal to his conviction, Constable insisted on seeing the world through his own eyes and on depicting it as he himself beheld it. Whilst these feathers were flying, Turner was demonstrating that beauty is to be found, not only on the gleaming summit of the Matterhorn, in the blue water! of the Bay of Naples and among the canals of Venice, but in the smoke-enfolded shipping of the murky Thames, in a battered

hulk being towed to her last moorings and in a railway train rushing through the rain.

Surveying the inspired masterpieces of Constable and Turner, men felt that, if beauty lurked in such things, it might be found in any one of a million places in which it had never occurred to them to look for it. It just shows, as Richard Jefferies, the eminent naturalist, said at the time, that, if a man carries a sense of beauty in his eye, he will see beauty in every daily ditch he passes.

Charles Dickens was a boy when Constable and Turner were at the height of their great renown. He ached to write, but did not feel competent to write, as it was fashionable to do, of remote periods and distant scenes. But why not write of life as he himself knew it? He set to work and soon threw a lustre about rags and tatters. As da Vinci built up his superb mosaic from the scraps that his master had disdainfully tossed aside, so Dickens wove a most entrancing web out of phases of human experience that few writers would have deigned to touch. Truth, in any setting, has a Grace of its own. Nothing can be too true to be good. The world that a man sees with his own eyes is the only world that he is qualified to commit to glowing canvas, to rapturous stanzas or to sturdy prose. It is distinctively his world, and, in it, he is monarch of all he surveys. It is the bounden duty of every man charged with the onerous responsibility of expressing his soul for the public good, whether in art, literature, politics or religion, to convey a faithful articulation of his own vision.

Each sees as nobody else sees. Within the framework of his craftsmanship he must therefore express himself as nobody else can possibly do. First and last, he must be himself; must see things as he alone can, and then describe what he witnesses in the palpitating terminology of his own personality. As Rudyard Kipling would say, he must paint the thing as he sees it for the God of things as they are. And, expressing his naked and diaphanous soul by means of his palette, his pulpit, his platform or his pen, he will find, sooner or later, real truth, like wisdom, is justified of all her children.

Chapter 5

THE LAMPOON

IN one ~~of her~~ Australian stories, written many years ago, Miss Ethel Turner tells of a little lassie, the daughter of a ~~Colonial~~ statesman, whose duty it was to run to the door and take in the newspapers. With childish curiosity, she scanned the pages, only to be tormented by the ugliest representations, in the form of cartoons and caricatures, of her revered parent. At last, her indignation reaching its climax, she took a photograph from the mantelpiece and set off in charming wrath to show the offending pressmen what her father did actually look like.

The engaging story raises an interesting question. What is the relationship between a portrait and a caricature? Is a portrait something more than a caricature or something less? It is something less. A portrait may be a severely accurate representation of the man as he appeared at a given moment. A caricature, on the other hand, is not concerned with strict facial or personal resemblance. A statue based on a caricature would be condemned as a monstrosity. Yet, by wantonly exaggerating all the oddities, idiosyncrasies and mannerisms of the man, the cartoonist conveys an impression of his vivid and palpitating peculiarities such as no sober portrait, or series of portraits, could possibly give.

A caricaturist makes it his business to exalt the impishness of exaggeration into real artistry. Nobody who saw Gladstone, in or out of Parliament, noticed anything unusual about his collars. Indeed, when the authorities of Madame Tussaud's added Gladstone to their famous collection of waxworks, they sent to the statesman's home at ~~Carlton~~ House Terrace craving one of his collars and were astonished to ~~find that~~ its dimensions were quite normal. But the wits of Fleet ~~Street~~ got the impression that Gladstone's collars were slightly conspicuous, and, week by week, they portrayed Mr. Gladstone's moods

and tempers by the crumpled, sedate or defiant condition of his enormous collars.

To take another example, Lord Randolph Churchill-Sir Winston's father-was tall, well-groomed, with large, bright challenging eyes and a neatly curled moustache. But J. P. O'Connor pointed out that there was something about his behaviour in the House that reminded one of an eager, impudent, self-assertive schoolboy. Thereupon, Sir John Tenniel seized upon the idea, and, for years, Lord Randolph adorned the cartoons as a small and impertinent youngster. The caricature did a certain amount of violence to Lord Randolph's stately stature; but, on the other hand, every sketch was such a lifelike presentment of the waggishness, unexpectedness and audacity of the statesman's mind that it was felt to be a brilliant forthsetting of the real man.

One of the cleverest caricaturists of all time was Charles Dickens. Nobody knew better than he how to exaggerate the freaks and oddities of living men in building the characters that he wove into his fiction. John Leech, the great *Punch* cartoonist, used to rule his household with his deft and clever pencil. If there was any pouting or sulking or bickering, he would instantly draw a notebook from his pocket, and, with rare cunning, sketch the face that was flushed or puckered. A spice of mischievous exaggeration entered, of course, into the drawing; but, on its presentation to the youthful offender, smiles and merriment, not untinged with shame, invariably usurped the place of passion and tears.

The principle is capable of infinite extension. We should all be the better for seeing ourselves as others see us. Jesus Himself, the supreme master of every gracious art, displayed a rare skill in making men see the absurdity of their prejudices and frailties. Many a man must have gone home, after listening to those utterances by the roadside and the hill side and the lake-side to laugh at himself with a laughter that led him halfway to repentance. In poetic flight or telling parable, such a man looks into his own face as in a mirror and, seeing himself for the man he really is, highly resolves that, in the days to come, a nobler and a better being shall take that man's place.

FRILLS AND FLOURISHES

HUMANITY is an intricate tangle of contradictions. Civilization, for example, is being swept by a hurricane of sophistication. Our grandfathers and grandmothers would turn in their graves if they could hear and see the things that, every day of our lives, assail our ears and eyes. Yet, side by side with this glorification of sophistication, the period is marked by an extraordinary insistence on simplicity. In architecture, in literature, in music and in the technique of education, as well as in the commonplace matters of food, attire, office and home, there is a violent revolt against frills and flourishes, and a stern demand for the severest vehicles of self-expression.

The old-time novelists made their gallant heroes propose to their lovely heroines in periods so charmingly constructed that they stand as flawless models of British eloquence. The thing is absurd upon the face of it. No sensible woman would believe in the sincerity of a suitor whose tongue could become fluent with polished rhetoric at such a time. When life approximates to sublimity, it invariably expresses itself with simplicity. In the depths of mortal anguish, at the climax of human exultation or in the throes of supreme emotion, we do not employ a grandiloquent phraseology. We talk in monosyllables.

Sophistication, especially in literature, represents the repudiation of sublimity and therefore the annihilation of simplicity, for sublimity and simplicity are inseparable. Great poets, Macaulay argues, are men who have maintained their childish fancy unimpaired. He who would become a Dante, a Shakespeare or a Milton must first become a little child. Robert Louis Stevenson knew what he was doing when, in writing *Treasure Island*, he discussed every sentence with his small stepson.

Dr. Boyd Carpenter, Bishop of Ripon, was asked if he felt

THE LAST MILESTONE

nervous when preaching before Queen Victoria. He smiled at the sheer absurdity of the question. 'It never occurs to me,' he replied, 'to address Her Majesty. Glancing round the Chapel Royal I see, not only the Queen, but the servants, down to the scullery-maid. I then concentrate on the scullery-maid!' It was probably for this reason that the Bishop became Queen Victoria's favourite preacher. For it is the simplicities that unite. They captivate the attention of the scullery-maid and win the heart of the Queen. It is the simple things that bind all classes and all ages in one.

Sophistication may bring its votary into line with the vogue of the vicinity and the mode of the moment; but it may, at the same time, sever the link that binds the individual to distant latitudes and remote ages. Two lovers in a shady lane, arms entwined, lost to all the world! It is the timeless idyll of humanity. Adam and Eve walked thus; so did Boaz and Ruth; so did **Abélard** and **Héloïse**; so did Romeo and Juliet; so did Gabriel and Evangeline. But two lovers on a motor-cycle; he in the saddle and she riding pillion! The motor-cycle may be the last word in mechanical ingenuity, but it breaks the bond between these two lovers and all the lovers of the ages.

It is the simplicities that endure. In a classical and memorable passage of his ***Decline and Fall***, Gibbon describes the triumph of the most majestic masterpieces of Roman architecture. Huns, Goths, Turks and Vandals had done their worst. Yet when, like a storm that had spent its fury, this frenzy of annihilation had passed, the monumental simplicities of the noble city remained unimpaired. The fretwork and the fancywork, the delicate carving and the dainty embellishments, had fallen before the savagery of the invaders; but the towering columns, the colossal arches and the stately pillars defied alike the teeth of time and the malice of the barbarians.

All this furnishes an eloquent demonstration of one of the most profound truths that ever fell on human ears-'Now abideth faith, hope, love.' Inventions may come and go; fashions may wax and wane; innovations may first startle and then weary us; but these commanding simplicities-faith

and hope and love-endure though all things else depart; and, enduring, they bind in noble comradeship all who, the world over and the ages through, have come to recognize their worth.

Chapter 7

WINTER SUNSHINE

ADOLPHE COTTE, the Breton essayist, has a story of a quaint old musician who lived in the woods outside St. Brieux, whose compositions included nothing of note except a brilliant little frolic entitled 'Winter Sunshine'. Against a subdued and even sombre background, there stood out melodious patches of remarkable beauty and infectious gaiety. Asked as to the inspiration of this exceptional creation, the good little peasant replied that he had always held that the happiest man on the face of the earth is the man who can make the most of the sunshine that breaks up and brightens the winter.

No phase of human life is unadulterated. There are bright days in winter-time and bleak days in summer-time. The sunshine is not switched off in the autumn, to be switched on again in the spring. Midwinter's Day may be wet and cold and uninviting, but if, as may easily happen, it proves to be bright and sunny, with scarcely a cloud in its deep blue sky, we do not assume that the mechanism of the universe has been thrown out of gear.

Life is like that. It is a thing of medleys and mixtures. Henry Fielding-'the father of our fiction' as Sir Walter Scott called him-made this doctrine the basis on which all his books are built. There is no such thing, he insisted, as unadulterated virtue or unmitigated vice. You might as well look for a summer without a single shower or a winter without one burst of brightness. Mr. Fielding's works, the heroines, however lovable, are never angelic; the scoundrels, however detestable, are never fiendish. He found his fellow-man very much of a mixture and he so depicts them. His heroes are speckled by grievous faults and his villains occasionally astound you by their downright goodness of heart. The literary critics of the eighteenth century looked askance

at this unusual interpretation of human nature. Fielding, they said, was running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. He could not have it both ways. Men must be good or they must be bad; there was no halfway house. These critics forgot the story of the little girl who had a little curl right down the middle of her forehead--

when she was good, she was very, very good,
But when she was bad, she was horrid.

In a telling reply, Fielding as good as told his assailants that there is no law operating in the solar system that would prevent a burst of dazzling sunshine at midwinter or a biting wind, chilling you to the bone, in the height of summer. He would venture to affirm, he wrote, that he had known men who were universally and deservedly esteemed who would not have scrupled, under certain circumstances, to cut a friend's throat; and he had known fellows, with whom no self-respecting man should be seen in conversation, perform acts of the most exemplary kindness and benevolence. Nothing is so unpredictable as sunshine.

The genial little philosopher who set the forests of Brittany to music argued that the secret of happiness lies in making the most of those sudden bursts of brightness that break upon us at unusual times or that break upon us from unexpected sources. Instead of regarding the spasmodic goodness of doubtful characters as a species of hypocrisy, it is more in accordance with all the facts of the case to appraise it at its face value. Trouble is a bleak and bitter experience; but it is invariably accompanied by little acts of thoughtfulness and generous offers of helpfulness that warm the heart at the time and enrich the memory for ever after.

In his *Cheapside to Arcady*, Arthur Scammell says that, for some weeks, he had occasion to pass daily down a dingy street in London. It was winter-time. Sitting on the edge of a stone wall in this squalid and sunless alley was a cripple, his crutches beside him, shivering with the cold. A few yards further on, beside the river, was a sunny open space surrounded by trees and flowers, lawns and fountains, with a comfortable

seat from which one could drink in the loveliness spread around. But, says Mr. **Scammell**, the unhappy man never even looked that way. He was by no means alone in his failure to appreciate the peculiar value of the sunshine that comes to us in winter.

Chapter 8

THE INSIDE VIEW

THE ancients used to say that no man had earned the right to die until he had planted a tree, built a house, written a book and begotten a child. In relation to three of these—the tree, the house and the child—nobody need seriously quarrel; but, when it comes to the book, uncomfortable apprehensions arise. If Tom, Dick and Harry are all to write books, what kind of books are they to write? A possible solution of the problem emanates from Oliver Wendell Holmes. Life is too good, he suggests, to be allowed, at its conclusion, to pass from sight.

Whilst he still possesses the energy to do it, Holmes argues, every man should sit down and write his autobiography. Even if it is never printed, it will serve several excellent purposes. It will recall to the writer's mind the early friendships that helped to mould his career; it will rescue from the peril of forgetfulness many pleasant experiences too good to be lost; and it will enshrine in a permanent form the record of incidents and impressions about which the memory would naturally become less trustworthy as the years pass.

The man whose lifestory is not worth writing has never yet been born. Let an aspiring author, eager for a theme, put on his hat and step out into the street. With as much politeness as he can muster, let him intercept the first person whom he happens to meet; and let him break to that astonished individual the sensational intelligence that he is about to write the stranger's biography. It does not matter in the least who the stranger is. It may be a millionaire or it may be an organ-grinder; or, for that matter, it may be the millionaire's mastiff or the organ-grinder's monkey. Such a book, sensibly written, would prove of entrancing interest. The twists and turns of its colourful pageantry, the cunning intricacies of its droll comedy and poignant tragedy, would hold the reader spellbound from the first page to the last.

But Tom, Dick and Harry will probably prefer to write, not biographies, but autobiographies; and an autobiography possesses qualities that are positively sacramental. For an autobiography is far more than a self-written biography. An autobiography should be an **epic** of spiritual portraiture. It should reveal much of which a biographer takes no **cognisance**. A biographer views the temple of the hero's personality from the outer court; the autobiographer views it from the inmost shrine. A biography is eventual-a record of events; an autobiography is spiritual-a seismograph of the soul.

The pivotal passages of life are all spiritual. The subtle processes of education, both in and out of school, are spiritual processes; the choice of a vocation is a poignant spiritual crisis; the surge of sex, the capture of the affections and the phenomenon of mating are all of them spiritual experiences; and it goes without saying that the dawn of faith is spiritual. These are the things that we have a right to expect in an autobiography. The man is in the confessional, and, having voluntarily entered it, he is under obligation to bare his inmost **soul**.

All literature divides itself into the biographical and the autobiographical. Take the novelist, for example. The **old-fashioned** novelist was a biographer. Describing certain characters, he told us what they said and did. It was George Eliot who set the new fashion. George Eliot stands in our literature as the audacious pioneer of introspective romance. She writes from the centre; she is in the secrets of all her characters; she scrutinizes their motives, their sensations, their passions; she tells the tale from the inside.

The Bible itself is the outstanding example of this type of literature. In a way that seems positively uncanny, it senses the vague, formless, inarticulate cravings of every man's inmost being. It says very little about the sensational happenings that engross the attention of contemporary historians, but it places on indelible record the things that help a man, of any nation or of any age, to live his life and to live it on the loftiest plane. **In** its throbbing pages, deep calleth unto deep. With gripping power it lays its hand upon the human heart. Without

scolding, it stirs the conscience. Without arguing, it sways the reason. And, by the artless presentation of the most exquisite cameo in the entire gallery of world biography, it lifts our minds heavenwards and leads us back to God.

Chapter 9

TALKING TO ONESELF

THE keeping of a diary is a species of self-communing; the self of Today talking to the same self of Tomorrow. The man who talks to himself usually justifies his peculiarity on two grounds: he likes to hear a sensible man talk and he likes to have a sensible man to talk to. In the greatest detective story ever written, the exciting climax turns on the strictly private entries of a young lady's diary. It may be that, by this artifice, Wilkie Collins designed to stress the abiding value and importance of such well-kept and confidential documents.

In gathering up the evidence by means of which the famous Moonstone mystery was eventually solved, the sturdy Gabriel Belleridge distinctly recalled certain happenings, but he had no idea as to the dates on which they occurred. Then Penelope, his charming and lovable young daughter, artlessly remarked that it was all recorded in her private diary. Gabriel demanded that she should instantly hand over the volume; and, at the bare mention of so preposterous a proposal, the indignation of the dutiful and affectionate Penelope was beautiful to see. She would supply any information that the critical situation required; but hand over her diary! It would be a sacrilege of the worst kind.

An honest and conscientiously kept diary is an instrument by means of which a man preserves his own personality for his future delectation and instruction. Like bees in amber, the thoughts, feelings and impressions of Today are made available to the eyes of Tomorrow. Emerson used to speak of his diary as his savings bank; in it he hoarded the treasures of experience to be drawn upon for future guidance. Other men have acted similarly, but from other motives. One of the loneliest figures in history is General Gordon during his long vigil at Khartoum. How could he shatter the maddening tyranny of his solitude? He kept a diary, and, as though his

very life depended on it, spent all his time in formulating the entries. In the darkest days of his career, Sir Walter Scott started a diary and communed with it day by day—just for company.

Few things are more touching or more significant than the concern that dying men display, under certain conditions, to keep their journals intact to the last. We think of Livingstone's journal with its final entries, written in mortal agony, scarcely legible. We think of Burke's journal, **penned** in the dusty heart of Australia, in which the dying explorer, anxious that his record shall be absolutely complete, records in graphic detail his own death. We think of the journal of Captain Scott, found among Antarctic snows, kept with faithful jealousy as long as the dying man had strength to hold a pen. By means of their diaries, deathless men escape from their incarcerating isolation, establish a point of vital contact with the throbbing world that they have left behind, and say their say to the Ages.

Among all her priceless archives, the Church has no documents comparable in value with personal outpourings of this intimate kind. She treasures as above all price the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, the Breviary of St. Teresa, Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*, Newton's *Autobiography* and the self-revealing journals of men like David Brainerd and John Woolman. Mr. Wesley not only left us his **monumental Journal**, but, with astute statesmanship and penetrating insight, he insisted that all his men should commit to pages the radiant experiences of which they loved to tell.

One of these documents elicited the unqualified praise of Southey; whilst Matthew Arnold, a fastidious critic who seldom went into ecstasies over that sort of thing, said that Samson Staniforth's narrative is reminiscent of the inspired testimony of St. Paul himself. The entire collection is a library of heart throbs. In such forthright and unaffected records religion expresses itself in the terms of palpitating experience; there is a ring of reality about it; it demonstrates the place in human affection and esteem that personal chronicles must always hold.

ANCHORS OF INTELLECT

IT was said of Wordsworth that his music transcended in sublimity, profundity, and sweetness that of any of his classical contemporaries because he kept in his secret cupboard a modest stock of certainties. The phrase is provocative. In a world like this, no man can hope to wield a commanding influence in education or in politics, in Church or in State, or even among the affairs of the office and the home unless, together with a miscellaneous assortment of nebulous speculations and tentative opinions, he possesses a small but valuable hoard of inflexible convictions. We all detest and abhor the man who is cocksure about everything, but at the same time we pity the man who is certain of nothing. His path is shrouded in a perpetual haze, a fog that the sunshine never penetrates, a mist that drifts this way and that way, but never dissolves.

Those who have followed the adventures of George Fielding in *It is Never Too Late* to Mend will remember how Charles Reade describes the search for the lost cattle. George takes Jacky, the blackfellow, and they set out on this quest under a broiling Australian sun. Presently Jacky makes an abrupt and cryptic announcement. 'Jacky think!' he says; and stands stock still, intently surveying the horizon. A few minutes later he again breaks the silence. 'Jacky know!' he cries. He afterwards explains that, before the first ejaculation, he had seen a crow swoop down behind a distant hill. It aroused a suspicion. But when, on watching, he saw other crows coming from all points of the compass and converging on the same spot, suspicion crystallized into certainty. He knew. The two men tramped the six miles to the hillside, and there, surely enough, were the cattle. Few changes are more notable than the transition from the realm of 'I think!' to the realm of 'I know!'

W. E. Henley, the poet who wrote 'Invictus' and who enjoyed the intimate friendship of Robert Louis Stevenson, said of Lord Lister, after the great surgeon had operated upon him, that 'his rare, wise smile was sweet with certainties'. It is a noble and revealing phrase. The man who walks the street with a serene assurance, and who radiates among his patients or constituents, his customers or his colleagues, an infectious confidence is panoplied against the assaults of all conceivable and inconceivable eventualities. Every man should enjoy golden moments in which he leaves the chilly lowlands of doubt and plants his feet securely on the sunlit heights above. Life holds few more exultant or triumphant experiences.

Carlyle never forgot the moment at which he made that notable ascent. It was, he says, on a sultry dog-day in Paris. His spirit was clogged with inexplicable dread. He stopped, took hold on himself, faced the issues, and shook himself free from the frigid sensations that had oppressed him. 'It was from that hour,' he says, 'that I date my spiritual rebirth; perhaps I directly thereupon began to be a man!' His feet were on a rock. To the end of his days, he could never define the mental processes by which he attained this inward satisfaction.

In point of fact, certainty seldom comes by way of argument, proof, and demonstration. A man can prove along these lines that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles or that two and two make four. But he cannot prove that the sun will rise tomorrow morning, that his mother loved him, or that his wife is true to him. It is only the minor things that are demonstrable; the major things scorn to submit themselves to that ordeal.

No man needs to be sure of everything. The captain of a ship, in bringing his vessel into port through a haze or a drizzle, does not need to see all the trees and the houses along the shore; if he can distinctly make out one or two fixed landmarks he can proceed with confidence. As in the case of Wordsworth, a very frugal stock of certainties will suffice to irradiate life. The charm of Paul's epistles lies in the fact that, whilst he confesses to doubt and uncertainty on many

subsidiary matters, there are a few stately verities on which he is able to speak with unwavering conviction. 'I know whom I have believed; I know that nothing can separate me from the love of Christ; I know that all things work together for good,' and so on. A man may be very hazy concerning a multitude of most important things, but if, like Wordsworth, he has in his secret cupboard a modest stock of such certainties as these, he can eke out a very comfortable existence here and greet the unseen with a cheer.

Chapter 11

DIVIDING THE SPOIL

IN his *Marriage*, Mr. H. G. Wells tellingly describes a gripping moment in the life of his hero. Trafford, a clever scientist, has succeeded beyond all his dreams. He has made an enormous fortune, married a beautiful wife, and built for himself a palatial home. Then one day, in a sudden spasm of introspection and heart-searching self-examination, he asks himself: 'But what am I doing with it all? What am I doing with it?' It is a pertinent inquiry. Success in life depends very largely upon proficiency in two fine arts—the art of acquiring and the art of administering our acquisitions. In the early stages of a man's career, he takes it for granted that the great thing is to acquire. Later on, a still more baffling problem presents itself. He has acquired; to what practical use shall he put his gains? He has earned his leisure; how shall he spend it? The wealth is amassed; what shall he do with the money?

One of those ancient sages to whom we so often turn amidst our modern perplexities, tells how he once came upon a Syrian backwoodsman who had just felled a tall cedar. It lies prostrate before him. And, now that it is down, what shall he do with the timber? In his *Woman in White*, Wilkie Collins tells how Sir Percival Glyde spent the whole of his time in making walking-sticks. He filled the house with them. He never used one of them; never conferred upon his products a second glance; when they were finished his interest in them was exhausted. There was no relationship at all between the labour that he lavished upon them and the satisfaction that the fruit of that labour afforded him.

There is no sense in everlastingly chopping down trees unless we know what we propose to do with the timber; there is no sense in obtaining academic distinctions unless we have some purpose to serve by our education; there is no sense in heaping up wealth unless we have some project for

its ultimate use. The **axeman** whom the prophet encountered in the woods had a programme-of a kind. He decided to divide the fallen tree into three parts. with the first he will roast his meat; a man must eat. He thus pays tribute to the Necessities of life. Then, thinking of the chilly evenings, he sets the second part aside for firewood. He will sit beside his blazing camp-fire, rub his hands, and feel that life is good. He thus makes his concession to the Luxuries of life. And then, from the remnant of his log, he will carve for himself a god and will fall down and worship it. He thus does homage to the Sanctities of life. These three apportionments of his booty are most fascinating.

He is evidently conscious of three great hungers-the hunger of the body for food, the hunger of the senses for comfort, and the hunger of the soul for adoration. In dividing his log with a view to the satisfaction of these cravings, he makes that log a concrete expression of his inner life. The earmarking of part of the timber to the physical requirements of his being, part of it to sensuous enjoyment, and a part of it to a recognition of the spiritual needs of his nature, reveals the exact place which each of these elements occupies in his heart. For the wonder of our humanity is so intricate and so pervasive that it infects inanimate objects with its own virtues and vices, its own merits and defects. A log of wood is, in itself, neither moral nor immoral; it is non-moral. Yet, so soon as it becomes somebody's property, it stands transfused by all the ethical forces that mark the personality and the character of its owner. It is very curious and intensely significant that there has crept into our legal phraseology the word 'personalty' as applied to property. It reflects the underlying and vital truth that, in actual fact, our possessions become a mere extension of ourselves.

Once we possess a thing we incorporate it into our personal organism. Three men may each possess a sheet of paper. The first, a lover, will transmute it into a vehicle for the expression of his passion. The second, a poet, will inscribe upon it a song that will be sung for centuries. The third, a statesman, will turn it into an ultimatum that will plunge the world into war.

Our money becomes good money or bad money in exact proportion to our own goodness or badness. If the personality of its owner be good, the money will be good money and will be so spent, invested, and administered as to uplift mankind. If the personality of its owner be corrupt, the money will be bad money and will blight humanity in its **flow**. George Eliot's Silas Marner twice possessed the same money. As a miser he hoarded it and his life narrowed and hardened under its baleful influence. On regaining it after its loss, he **revelled** in spending it in securing the happiness of those about him, and the gold, once his curse, glorified his whole career.

In the old backwoodsman's allocation of his timber, there is only one factor to be deplored. We admire the deliberate way in which this man divided his treasure among the necessities, the luxuries, and the sanctities of life. It is specially pleasing that he found room in his heart for the sanctities. It is not everybody that does. But he put the sanctities last. He regarded the cooking of his food as of primary importance. He accorded second place to the crackling fire that would cheer his long and lonely evenings. And the residue of his log-the lump left over after the demands of life's necessities and life's luxuries had been met-he made into an idol. In all the circumstances, we may feel some gratification that religion came into the picture at all. But it finished a bad last. He gave his god his leavings. When, like hungry dogs fighting for a bone, his Stomach, his Senses and his Soul struggled for his treasure, his Soul had to be content with the scraps that the others left. The dignity of the faith should preserve it from so humiliating and melancholy a fate.

Chapter 12

MUTE ELOQUENCE

AS every traveller knows, there is but one really universal language-the language of gesture. It was spoken in the world's first morning, and men will still be using it when they are startled by the shocks of doom. It was the language of the Stone Age and it will be the language of the Golden Age. It is spoken all the world over by men of all kinds, colours, classes, and conditions; and, if either Mars or the moon is really inhabited, it is spoken there too.

The little child speaks it before he is able to utter one single word of our clumsier dictionary speech, whilst the aged speak it long after the palsied lip has lost its utterance. The deaf and dumb are experts in its intricacies. It is equally intelligible to the English merchant on the London market, to the Indian trapper in the Western forests, to the Chinese mandarin in the interior of Asia, to the South Sea islander basking in the rays of an equatorial sun, and to the Eskimo in his frozen hut amid the blinding whiteness of the icy North. It is known even to the beasts of the field and the birds of the air; they understand it and sometimes even speak it. So universal a thing is the language of gesture!

The shrug of the shoulders, the flash of the eye, the knitting of the brows, the curling of the lip, the stamping of the foot, the clenching of the fist, the nodding of the head, the pointing of the hand-here is a language which is known to everyone! It has no alphabet, no grammar, and no syntax, yet the simplest understand it. Indeed, the simplest understand it best.

The savage is a perfect master of the art of gesture; he speaks with every nerve and sinew. And the little child is no less eloquent. His pushings and pullings; his beckonings and pointings; his smilings and poutings are as expressive as anything in the vocabulary. He has found a speech for which

the builders of Babel sighed in vain, a speech that can be understood by men and women of every nation under heaven.

Man is an inveterate signalman. He has a perfect genius for concocting mysterious codes; he revels in flashing out cryptic heliograms; he glories in receiving and deciphering occult messages. He even communicates with himself in this abstruse and recondite fashion.

A man will twist a piece of string round his finger or tie a knot in the corner of his handkerchief, or stick a scrap of stamp paper on the face of his watch, to remind him of something that has nothing whatever to do with string or handkerchief or stamp paper. He moves in a welter of mnemonics. The string and the knot represent his secret code; and in the terms of that code this incorrigible signalman is signalling to himself, that is all.

Moreover, we not only signal to ourselves, but we are fascinated by the spectacle of other people signalling to themselves. A novel becomes invested with a new interest when its plot suddenly turns upon the weird phenomena of a witch's cavern or the mysterious ritual of a gipsy camp. By means of her viper, her owl, her toad, her cauldron, her tripod, her herbs; and all the rest of it, the withered crone is signalling to herself from morning to night. By means of the crossed sticks where the roads fork, the gipsies leave tokens for themselves and for each other.

Many a man will wear a secret charm hanging round his neck or suspended from his watch chain, or will attach a mascot to his car, although nobody but himself knows the significance of the bauble. Henrik Ibsen, the great Norwegian dramatist, kept on his writing table a small tray containing a number of grotesque figures—a wooden bear, a tiny devil, two or three cats, one of them playing a fiddle, and some rabbits. 'I never write a single line of any of my dramas,' Ibsen used to say, 'without having that tray and its occupants before me on my table. I could not write without them. But why I use them, and how, this is my own secret.'

Here was a notable and brilliant thinker happy in being

able to **flash** covert messages to himself by means of a code which no one but himself could begin to understand.

The universe itself is persistently struggling to express itself through the agency of an intricate system of signals. The stars overhead are signalling; the astronomer, mastering the code, reads the secrets of the skies. The stones that we trample underfoot are signalling; the geologist unravels the cryptogram and interprets the romance of long forgotten ages.

The greatest things that man ever has to say he says, not in the terminology of the dictionary, but in the language of signs. The lover scorns the vocabulary. He can say what he has to say so much more expressively by means of signals. A look, a pressure of the hand, a ring, a kiss-what vocal utterance could compare with a code like this? The same is true of grief and of the sympathy that sorrow elicits. No letter of condolence, however tenderly phrased, can say all that can be said by a hand clasp, a countenance suffused with emotion and a spontaneous moistening of the eyes.

Or, to look in another direction, what man could express in so many words all that he feels when, for example, he waves his country's flag? It is, as **Carlyle** says, merely a piece of bunting that could be bought in any market place for a handful of coppers; yet a million men would gladly die for it. And what of the silent symbolism of the faith-the upward pointing spire, the broken bread, the sign of the Cross itself? In his Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington, Tennyson glories in the thought that the great commander lies immediately:

Under the cross of gold that shines over city and river.

That glowing Cross, lifted high above London's central roar, has always been regarded as one of the most impressive spectacles in the city. Millions, glancing upward from the surging crowds below, have, in their hour of stress, been **made to** feel that heaven is not so remote from earth as it sometimes seems. The mute symbol has **ministered** solace, strength, and sympathy. It is the highest form that the science of signals ever takes.

THE DOMESTIC SPIRE

WHEN the British authorities, exactly four centuries ago, set themselves to arrest the alarming denudation and destruction of the English forests, they little dreamed that they were introducing a new era in national life and manners. Until then, wood had been the popular fuel. They ordained that, in future, coal must be used. But the general change from wood to coal meant that every dwelling, however humble, must have a chimney. Until then, chimneys had been the monopoly of a privileged few; from that moment they became universal.

Through all the earlier stages of English life, warmth and comfort were derived from fires that blazed in the centre of the apartment, the smoke-made as fragrant or at least as malodorous as possible by the use of appropriate woods—escaping through such apertures as it could find. Even in royal palaces, baronial halls, and manor houses, such braziers burned. It was in the smoke of one of these braziers, in King Eadwine's great hall in Northumbria, that the sparrow fluttered in confusion, providing Paulinus with a dramatic illustration as he pleaded with the sovereign for the introduction of Christianity. It was into a similar brazier at the Guildhall that, in the presence of Henry the Fifth, Sir Richard Whittington tossed the documents that proved His Majesty's enormous financial obligations to himself. A similar scene marks the climax of Thackeray's *Esmond*.

We are never tired of singing the praises of Benjamin Franklin for inventing the lightning-rod which brings the venom of the angry skies down the outside of the chimney to the ground. But what of the man who devised a way of conveying the fumes of the fire and the suffocating smoke up inside of the chimney to the open air above? A man could exist, and find pleasure in living, before lightning-rods were

introduced; but one can scarcely repress a shudder as he thinks of the days before chimneys came in. Old Raphael Holinshed, the quaint Elizabethan chronicler, paints a graphic picture of an evening in the home of his childhood, the guests scarcely visible to each other through the haze, and the conversation punctuated by incessant coughing. With the appearance of the chimney, social and domestic life was regenerated. Fireside pleasures became the delight of every cottage. The chimney corner became the most potent spot in England. There, when the hard day's work was **finished**, neighbours met and grappled with the problems of Church and State in really noble fashion.

The chimney corner had a national **value**. None of your gossip and chatter and funny stories! The conclave was as solemn as a senate; and many a budding village Hampden, listening open-eyed to the furious debate that took place there, imbibed principles that afterwards prompted him to write his name in glowing capitals on the **golden** scroll of fame. Moreover, in those quiet old days, before newspapers and railway trains and telegrams had burst upon mankind, the social **influence** of the chimney corner was worth something. The music, the recitals, the games, the fun and frolic incidental to the unhurried intercourse of happy people, were worth to the nation more than any tongue can tell.

Moreover, the chimney introduced a new age in architecture. In one of his charming essays on English **country** life, Richard Jefferies points out that the old-fashioned cottages are all built around the chimney. 'The chimney,' he says, 'is the firm nucleus of solid masonry about which the low walls of rubble are clustered; when the cottage is **destroyed**, the chimney remains; and, against the chimney, it is built up again.' After a conflagration, everything else is a heap of charred ruins. The twisted leg of a metal **bedstead** and the battered remnants of an iron stove peep piteously out from the general wreckage. But the chimney stands serene and unaffected as if it had not even heard that a fire had occurred in the locality. It is the national emblem of constancy, of fidelity, of the friendship that holds on when ail else goes.

It is the symbol of the things that abide, the things over which storm and flame and tempest have no power.

Who that has entered any great city by train has not been arrested by the spectacle of an interminable forest of chimney-pots? They impress him as the outward and visible evidence of those embedded masses of humanity that make up the city's life and industry and emotion. Concerning those chimney-pots, Longfellow has a dainty little poem:

Each man's chimney is his Golden Milestone,
Is the central point from which he measures every distance
Through the gateways of the world around him.

In her *Roadmender*, Michael Fairless tells of an old man, dying in a wretched London garret, who had just been visited by a local clergyman. 'He said as 'ow there s golden streets yonder,' the sick man confided to Michael Fairless. 'I ain't perticler wot the streets is made of, but it'll seem homely-like if there's plenty of chimleys there!' 'The sun,' Michael Fairless adds, 'stretched a sudden finger, painting the chimney-pots red and gold against the smoke-dimmed sky; and, in that burst of radiance, the old man passed away.' In the light of that revealing and suggestive episode, the countless chimney-pots look like so many spires pointing the dwellers in the homes beneath to the skies above. They seem to know that, whilst they themselves can carry off something of the smoke that is generated below, the real happiness of the lives over which they stand sentinel depends on the degree to which those lives are enriched by the grace and favour of heaven itself

Chapter 14

THE DEMOCRACY OF MEDICINE

THIS is St. Luke's Day; and at this season the thoughts of the churches, and of vast numbers of people outside the churches, turn to the *fine* work done by our great hospitals. The *skilful* and sympathetic ministry of doctors and nurses in these excellently equipped institutions represents the very crown and climax of the highest type of civilization. It is natural that, in any movement on behalf of the hospitals, the churches should take a conspicuous part. The connection between the physical and the spiritual is very close. Knowing what we now know, it is no longer possible to divide life into watertight compartments. There are times when a doctor discovers that a sufferer's real trouble is beyond the scope of his treatment, and advises his patient to take a minister into his confidence; and there are times when a minister realizes that his visitor's mental anguish arises, not from spiritual dereliction, but from shattered nerves, and sends him to a doctor.

Nor is this all. For the very existence of the hospital springs from the instinct of mercy. And mercifulness is essentially a Christian grace. Nobody can travel far without being impressed by the gulf that yawns, in this respect, between the sentiments that prevail in a Christian country, on the one hand, and in heathen lands, on the other. One may, of course, see the most revolting cruelty under the shadow of a church spire, and may be treated with the most amazing kindness among pagan temples. But the general trend of things is in the opposite direction. The world would have been a hard and pitiless place if its temper had never been softened and sweetened by the introduction of the Christian faith.

Any man who has surveyed, even cursorily, the story of the centuries must have been profoundly impressed by the way in which the advance of medical science has kept pace

with the spread of the faith. The great central Figure of that faith was essentially a healer, and, with the growth of His authority among the peoples, sickness and disease have slunk away before Him. To take a concrete case, do we adequately recognize the way in which the world was transformed by the eradication of the plague? The earliest historians besprinkle their sombre pages with grim hints concerning the devastating pestilence by which the peoples of Asia and Europe were **afflicted**. The monster stalked through the ages, exacting his colossal toll with a merciless hand. Sooner or later it left a trail of tears in every household. In his *Life of Chaucer*, Sir A. W. Ward points out that, if the poet had been born thirty years earlier, he would have enjoyed twice as large a constituency. For, between the date of his birth and the date of the appearance of his first work, the population of England had **been** reduced by a half

The **pages** that contain these dismal records are among the most **terrible** in history. The imagination staggers **at** the attempt to people the world with the unborn descendants of these myriads of victims. The present population of the planet, viewed in this light, appears to be a mere handful of survivors-‘all that was left of them’. But, happily, the plague has been conquered. In the eighteenth century England was swept by a revival of religion so overwhelming, so dynamic, and so irresistible that it affected-vitally, fundamentally, and permanently-every phase of our national life. In days when ancient thrones were tottering and hoary institutions crumbling, it preserved for us, as **Lecky** has shown, our national integrity and respect. The country was born again. Social reforms were effected; slavery was abolished; industrial wrongs were righted; and the plague, the ghastly **spectre** of all preceding centuries, was banished by purer standards of living and saner systems of sanitation. **So** perfectly have the march of faith and the march of medicine kept in step with one another.

The modern hospital-scientifically designed, perfectly equipped, and efficiently staffed-stands as an impressive monument to the democratization of medicine. The ancients

held that the healing of bodily ills, the cure of diseases, and the protection, preservation, and prolongation of human life were privileges that should be extended only to a kind of physical and intellectual aristocracy. Plato argued that the disciples of Hippocrates were guilty of a serious mischief if, by their healing art, they caused men to outlive the period of their usefulness. They had no right, he maintained, to protract lives that were better closed. This cheerless philosophy was echoed in a later age by Petrarch, whose caustic criticisms and fierce invectives stung the ears of the physicians of the renaissance.

But, like a breath from the hills wafted through the streets of the city, a new spirit has stirred every phase of civilization. The movement for the conquest of disease has been democratized. We all feel towards medical science as we feel towards no other branch of academic research. We look with a vague and impersonal approval upon the academic triumphs of the astronomer, the geologist, and the botanist; but in the exploits of the medical profession we feel an immediate, an intimate, an almost affectionate concern. The experience of pain is so general, and the relationship between the ordinary citizen and the doctor so close, that every member of the community feels himself directly involved in every happening that encourages or hinders the work of the doctors. There is no single household that is not vitally affected by the advance of surgical skill; every pioneer of medical research is conscious that the eyes of millions of sufferers are turning wistfully towards him; and every hospital is a reminder to the lowliest citizen that, through its invaluable ministry, the richest fruits of scientific achievement will, in case of need, be placed ungrudgingly at his service.

A REALM OF MYSTERY

AT this, the holiday season, our thoughts turn instinctively to the sea. It is true that we are concerned only with the side of the sea—the sands and the shells and the pools and the shallows. Yet it is impossible to flirt with the ocean even in that superficial way without catching glimpses of its immensities and profundities. From time immemorial the ocean has been regarded as a mass of mystery. The ancients looked upon its expanse with a shudder. It was to them the emblem of uncertainty, of instability, of treachery and of illimitable power governed by caprice rather than by principle. It was beautiful one day and terrible the next; yet, to all appearances, destitute of any intelligible reason for its change of mood and temper.

Generally speaking, the Oriental hated the sea. The dreamers and philosophers of the brooding East spoke of it with apprehension, with distrust and with awe. Even the Jew, who represents the natural link between the East and the West, between the ancient and the modern, looked askance upon the waste of waters. With one possible exception, the Hebrew poets employ the imagery of the ocean only as symbolic of the forces of rebellion, anarchy, and defiance, whilst one of the most glowing passages in apocalyptic literature reaches its glowing climax with the triumphant assurance that, in the world to come, there shall be no more sea. The ocean stood for insurgence and revolt; it **represented** the things that cannot be subjugated or tamed. It separated nation from nation; and, if one dared to cross it, it threatened to engulf him in the passage or at least to cut him off from all intercourse with his former friends. For centuries the toll of the deep was considered moderate if two-thirds of the ships that sailed arrived safely at their destinations. Was it any wonder that men spoke of it as the salt, estranging sea? How could

they be expected to feel the faintest fondness for those rapacious powers that lurked grimly and ominously in the turbulent waters?

Nor is this sentiment of suspicion and of terror altogether a thing of the past. It springs to vigorous life once more whenever a wreck of any magnitude occurs. Neither the carnage caused by a great battle, the horrors attendant upon a frightful earthquake, the pitiless ravages of a cruel pestilence, the majestic sweep of a terrific conflagration, nor the awful desolation of a gaunt and widespread famine affects us with the dramatic force and vividness of which we are all conscious when a stately liner founders on one of the highways of our mercantile traffic. The most obvious reason is that the scene can be so easily **conjured** up. Everybody has seen a ship; everybody has seen **the** sea; and therefore everybody has seen the entire setting and stage-scenery of the dreadful tragedy. For all practical purposes, one large steamer is very much like another, and the sea is the same everywhere.

It is true that the sea is often spoken of as the natural emblem of all that is **fickle** and changeful; but this is pure illusion. It is the symbol of immutability. 'Look at the sea!' exclaims Max Pemberton, in **Red Mom**, 'how I love it! I like to think that those great rolling waves will go leaping by a thousand years from now. There is never any change about the sea. You never come back to it and find yourself shocked by the alterations that have been made in it. I suppose that if one stood here for a million years, the sea would not be different. You feel quite sure of it and it never disappoints you.' The land, with a greater semblance of stability, is for ever changing; but the sea remains the same age after age. He **who** has seen the ocean in the days of Elizabeth II has seen the ocean in the days of Rameses I. He who has looked upon the waters of the English Channel or the Tasman Sea has, to all intents and purposes, seen the Atlantic, the Pacific, the Adriatic and the Mediterranean. Every seascape is a cross-section of antiquity and **infinity**.

This familiarity with the surface of the sea enhances our sense of mystery when we transfer our thoughts to its **un-**

plumbed depths. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes compares a home among the mountains with a home by the side of the sea. You become familiar with the phenomena of the hills. You get to know the trees; you know exactly what to expect when you turn a certain corner: you see a light twinkling in the distance and you know from whose window it shines. But the sea is totally different. You never get to know it. It holds you at arm's length and encourages no intimacies. 'The sea,' Dr. Holmes declares, 'is feline. It licks your feet; its huge flanks purr very pleasantly for you; but it will crack your bones and eat you for all that, and wipe the crimson foam from its jaws as if nothing had happened.' On the land, when disaster occurs, all the wreckage is left to tell its own tale; but, on the ocean, Fate instantly obliterates all her tracks. The sea remembers nothing; it records nothing; it reveals nothing. The vanished cities that lie buried in the deep; the great ships that, having set sail, have never again been heard of; the unimaginable creatures that move among the dark and eerie silences of submarine forests; all this is enfolded in the most impenetrable mystery.

Happily, never, when knowledge and reason come to the aid of the resources, faith asserts itself. For those ancient prophets who emphasized in all their utterances the sense of dread inspired by the restless waters were nevertheless the most insistent in their proclamation that, however lawless those forces might seem, they were nevertheless under control. 'The sea is His and He made it!' they cried. And, at a later and more familiar stage of revelation they present the impressive spectacle of One who, amidst other wonders, commanded the winds and the waves and elicited from them immediate and implicit obedience.

Chapter 16

A LIMITED VIRTUE

WE have all been exasperated by the people who tell us with wearisome reiteration that cleanliness is next to godliness. They seem to think that their favourite aphorism was inscribed upon the **Decalogue** or included among the pearl-like phrases of the Sermon on the Mount. They must learn that the **proposition** boasts no such sublime authority. It may or may not have figured among the millions of sagacious observations that Confucius is supposed to have made, or that he intended to make, or that he would have made if it had been his good fortune to think of them. However that may be, the Bible is not responsible.

Cleanliness, we are told, is next to godliness. It sometimes is. And sometimes, on the contrary, it is as far from godliness as Pole is from Pole. Those who fancy that the familiar quotation is to be found in the pages of Holy Writ should reflect that, so far from chanting a psalm in praise of cleanliness, the inspired writers have a good deal to say in admiration of the grimy hands of the tired toiler, the stains and smudges on the person and apparel of a healthy child, and the flurry of dust necessarily created by the busy housewife. One of the old prophets picturesquely describes the horrors of famine as a time of cleanness of teeth, whilst another formulates the striking epigram: Where no oxen are, the crib is clean.

The ox is the dynamo of an Oriental farm. With his oxen the husbandman ploughs his fields, leads in his harvest, and transports his produce to market. If, through some tragic loss or devastating pestilence, the farmer is left without oxen, the cattle sheds may be a model of cleanliness-the harness and the gear all in their proper places, and the floor impeccably speckless-but look at the farm! Everything is going to rack and ruin. With no oxen, the crib is clean; but it is the cleanness of a dire and terrible catastrophe. A home in which

everything is in apple-pie order is not of necessity a matter for congratulation. The rooms are silent; there are no signs of childish romp and revelry. In the nursery, the toys are all in their proper places; everything is orderly and shipshape; all is **spick** and span. But the father and mother are heart-broken; their **child** is dead.

When at the height of his renown, Sir Henry Hawkins, the most successful criminal advocate of all time, contrasted the bewildering confusion of his office in 1859 with the flawless tidiness of his official apartment in 1839. In **1839**, when he was just starting, he took a tiny room in Elm Court. It was on the fifth floor. The papers were faultlessly arranged in the pigeonholes; a virgin sheet of white blotting paper adorned the brand-new desk; the pen nibs fairly glistened. In those days Hawkins spent most of his time in surveying the forest of chimney pots from the window and in listening at the top of the stairs in the frantic hope that one wonderful day, somebody would actually climb to the fifth floor. In his spacious rooms in 1859 there are piles of papers everywhere; messengers rush in and out; the waiting room is thronged with clients and witnesses; attorneys flit to and fro; clerks fly hither and thither; everything seems in a *whirl* and a flurry. But, with all its neatness, 1839 spelt worry and anxiety, whilst, with all its disorder, **1859** spelt prosperity and popularity. The upstairs office to which no client ever comes can readily be **kept** tidy.

Let every minister be thankful that his study *need's* tidying; let every barrister be thankful for the confusion in his office; let every carpenter be thankful for the shavings on the floor; let every mother be thankful for the tumult in the nursery; let **every** farmer be thankful that the crib needs cleaning out. It all goes to show that there is something doing. And, lifting the principle to a higher plane, let every man be thankful when his conscience cries out against him; the evil day is the day on which his conscience resolves to speak no more. We have all heard of the old grave-digger whose terrible cough elicited the sympathy of a visitor to the cemetery. Straightening himself up, the sexton pointed with

a sweeping gesture to the tombs around. There's plenty here,' he tellingly observed, 'who'd be glad of my cough!'

But, although the cough is a sign of life, it must be cured or it will drag the old man down to a grave of his own. The litter in the office is suggestive of a prosperous business; but it is, at the same time, a clamant call for some tidying hand. The soiled stall is a wholesome spectacle; but it cries aloud to the farmer for water and broom. The torments of an aroused conscience are symptoms of spiritual vitality for which a wise man will give thanks on bended knees; but they are useless and worse than useless unless they drive him, in his desperation, to the fountain open for all sin and for all uncleanness.

A MUSICAL FROLIC

THOUSANDS of people revel in the delicious and melodious comicalities of 'Sir William Schwenk Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan, but did either Gilbert or Sullivan imagine for a moment, when they first began to collaborate, that their work would so completely take the world by storm? Their success must have put to shame their most sanguine dreams. The operas became immensely popular when they were first produced and they are just as popular-perhaps more popular-today. Indeed, as a recent critic observed, they have become a touch-stone by which we instinctively judge other light musical pieces. In our view of all this, it is interesting to review the circumstances under which Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan first put their heads together. Mr. G. K. Chesterton declared that the most notable discovery of the Victorian era was the discovery of nonsense. That stirring age was pre-eminently an age of daring ingenuity and masterly manufacture; but Mr. Chesterton thought that the *finest* of all its innumerable *productions* was the making of good jokes. All that was *really* illustrious in the literature of that fruitful period emanated, he believed, from the awakening of an altogether delightful sense of exquisite *humour*. An entirely fresh vein was exploited, and the Englishman of those days excelled *himself*, in Mr. Chesterton's judgment, as a humorist, and one of the best humorists in Europe. 'This,' he declared, 'is the last essential of the Victorian. Laugh at him as a limited man, a novelist, a conventionalist, an opportunist, a formalist-what you will; but remember also that he is really a humorist, and may still be laughing at you!' Mr. Chesterton did not mean, of course, that *humour* only came into the world half a century ago, but that the Victorians gave us a *humour* of an entirely new kind. *Humour* was already a thing of antiquity when Diogenes was born; but for all that,

it is obvious that the age that presented to the world the inimitable drolleries of Dickens, the delightful adventures of Alice in Wonderland, the delicious merriment of Sir W. S. Gilbert, and the brilliant wit of had about it a certain facility for fun that none of its predecessors could pretend for one moment to rival. A sly twinkle haunted the eye of the typical Victorian, and a hearty peal of laughter was *never* far away.

Gilbert and Sullivan recognized from the start the humorist is beset by two opposite temptations, the temptation to buffoonery and the temptation to cynicism; and it is to their lasting honour that they contrived to steer *skilfully* between the rocks of *Scylla* on the one hand and the whirlpool of Charybdis on the other. 'Sullivan and I,' Gilbert tells us, 'set out with the determination to prove that these elements were not essential to the success of comic opera. We resolved that our plots, however ridiculous, should be coherent, that our dialogue should be void of *offence*; that, on artistic principles, no man should play a woman's part and no woman a man's. Finally, we agreed that no lady of the company should be required to wear a dress that she could not wear with absolute propriety at a private fancy ball. I believe I may say that we proved our case.' The pre-Victorian critics were fond of extolling Addison *as* the beau-ideal whose fountain of humour should be regarded as the model of the younger writers; and, in all the circumstances, it is difficult to quarrel with their choice. The merriment of Addison was certainly innocent of the ugly blemishes that disfigured the jests of Voltaire and the satires of Swift; but, on the other hand, it cuts a sorry figure when compared with those spacious realms of magnificent nonsense which the litterateurs of a century later so bravely discovered and so thoroughly explored. The flickering of mirth of the Georgian authors seems scarcely more worthy of comparison with the rich creations of the Victorian schools than does the *humour* that Heinrich Heine saluted in his kittens or that Darwin admired in his dogs. There is nothing in the older literature that can hold its own against the glorious gusto of Mr. Pickwick, the excruciating absurdities of the March

Hare, or the polished subtleties which for so many years have made famous Mr. Punch's Wednesday dinner-table at Bouverie St. And certainly the playwrights of a century ago were incapable of giving us anything that could compare with the rollicking drolleries of Pooh-Bah, the consequential pomposities of the Duke of Plaza-Toro and all the splendidly ridiculous creations of the Gilbert and Sullivan farce.

It is a serious mistake to suppose that nonsense exists merely for entertainment, recreation, and amusement. The humorist is often the most **effective** reformer. He does not scold or lecture or preach; he simply exposes the silly side of the thing that he wishes to alter. Gilbert had a natural facility for seeing the absurdities of **life**. He **finds** himself for example, at a fashionable wedding; it seems to him that the pomp and circumstance of the affair is badly overdone. It should, he thinks, be greatly simplified. But he does not storm or grow furious about it. 'I can't understand,' he writes, 'why so much fuss is made over a partnership, or rather I don't understand why the process should not be applied to all partnerships. It seems to me that the union (say) of Marshall and Snelgrove might, and should, have been celebrated in the same fashion. **Marshall** waiting at the altar for Snelgrove to arrive (dressed in Summer stock remnants); a choir to walk in front of Snelgrove chanting; a Bishop and a Dean (and also a solicitor) to ratify the deed of partnership; and a bevy of coryphee fitters-on to strew flowers in their path. It is a pretty idea, and invests a contract with a solemnity not to be found in a solicitor's or conveyancer's chambers.' Again, it was the fashion half a century ago, to discuss at great length, and with a ponderous show of erudition, the question of the sanity of Hamlet. Gilbert did not assail the learned **controversialists**; he simply took a hand in the debate himself. 'Opinion concerning Hamlet,' he wrote, "is divided.'

Some men hold

That he's the sanest far of all sane men—

Some that he's really sane, but shamming **mad—**

Some that **he's** really mad, but shamming **sane—**

Some that he will be mad, some that he **was—**

Some that he couldn't be. But, on the whole
 (As far as I can make out what they mean),
 The favourite theory's somewhat like *this*;
 Hamlet is idiotically sane
 With lucid intervals of lunacy.

This is excellent fooling in more than one way. Anything that develops and expands the sense of humour in a people increases the general intelligence of that people, adds to the sum total of its happiness and enriches its national life. An important and delicate situation may often be saved if the parties affected have an eye for the funny side of things. Who can review the strifes and squabbles of centuries gone by, without deploring the utter lack of humour which so often characterized the angry combatants? 'Isn't it desperately comical,' George Gissing makes one of his characters exclaim, 'that one human being can hate and revile another because they think differently about the origin of the universe?' A glance at the controversies of our own time, and then at those of a century or two ago, will reveal the pleasing extent to which the discovery of nonsense has moderated the acerbities of forensic and philosophical strife. Beyond the shadow of a doubt, the humorists have done us good, and every man whose appreciation of the ludicrous has enabled him to enjoy the irresistible conceptions of Gilbert and Sullivan will gratefully acknowledge that the new and rich vein exploited by those skilful fun-makers has proved in every way worthy of the distinguished genius which they applied to their superb adventure.

A FINDER OF PATHFINDERS

IN the ~~selfsame~~ year in which James Cook, then a mere strippling, put to sea for the first time, the child who was destined to share the thrills and hazards of the redoubtable captain's epoch-making voyages betrayed for the first time his innate flair for botanical research. This was Joseph Banks, popularly known years afterwards as the Grandfather of Australia, whose birthday we celebrate. The incident that gave direction to his life is worth recalling. As a schoolboy at Eton he was, one Summer evening, bathing in the Thames, and was enjoying his swim so much that he failed to notice the departure of his companions. In trudging his solitary way back to the school, he found himself in a leafy lane whose hedgerows were thickly carpeted with the most delicate and fragrant wild flowers. The charming spectacle threw him into transports of exquisite delight. From that moment all such growths captivated him; botany became the passion of every leisure hour. In recording the episode, his biographer observes that it is not too much to say that Australia was born in that lane that night.

Those who have closely scrutinized the story of Capt. Cook are well aware of the navigator's stupendous indebtedness to Banks. To begin with, Banks not only possessed profound erudition and an earnest desire to use it for the public good; he also possessed great wealth. When he heard that the most serious difficulty in the way of organizing Capt. Cook's expedition was financial, he ~~fitted out~~ the Endeavour at his own cost. Besides this, he unselfishly placed his own highly skilled services at Cook's disposal and even engaged Dr. Solander and other experts to assist him. Later on, the young naturalist's unquenchable thirst for botanical information led Capt. Cook to poke into all sorts of places that he would never otherwise have visited.

Nor did the contribution of Sir Joseph Banks to the destinies of Australia end here. For afterwards, as the historian says, 'when Australia was lying bare, with nothing but the remnants of a British flag upon its shores, and a few marks scored on trees to show where Cook and Banks had been, it was Banks who, by years of effort, persuaded the British Government to send out and colonize the land. He did not know how great a thing he did, but he was actually laying the foundation of the Australian nation.' The work that he performed even in his later years when, crippled by gout, he was confined to his couch and had to be carried on an invalid chair to his public appointments as president of the Royal Society, is one of the most extraordinary and unparalleled achievements in the story of the Empire.

He had time to reflect on the things that he had seen in different parts of the world. He remembered standing on the deck of the Endeavour watching the shores of vast but unknown lands pass, like a panorama, along the horizon; could he not dedicate his remaining energies to the task of inspiring young men with a passion for exploration? He set to work and succeeded most sensationally. Living in retirement, and in constant pain, in his English home, he coaxed adventurous young men to his fireside, and unfolded the vision of empty continents that haunted him, sleeping and waking. Many of them went back to their homes and offices, smiling superciliously. But on the minds of several of his listeners his story had the effect that he so fervently desired. He contrived, for example, to excite the fancy of three young men who, as a result of those fireside conversations, wrote their names in letters indelible upon the world's scroll of fame. They were Mungo Park, Lachlan Macquarie and John Franklin.

Mungo Park became, under the influence of Sir Joseph Banks, the pioneer of African exploration. He began the work that was afterwards completed by Burton, Speke, Livingstone, Stanley and an army of dauntless and devoted pathfinders. Franklin, under the spell of Sir Joseph, turned his face to the White North, and, at the cost of his life, opened

up the North West Passage. And Lachlan Macquarie, the third of that youthful triad, opened the gates of Australia and converted a microscopic and insignificant settlement—a mere group of squatters—into a huge continental dominion.

Whenever we catch the thrill of African exploration; whenever we read afresh the stirring story of suffering and adventure in the icy polar seas; and whenever we feel the glow of ardent admiration as we contemplate the indomitable courage of our hardy Australian pioneers, we shall do well to allow our minds to journey one step farther back, and to conjure up the image of old Sir Joseph, his head propped up by pillows and his feet enswathed in bandages, chatting with his youthful protégés beside an English hearth. Nor do the three ponderous names that we have specifically mentioned exhaust the list. Sir Joseph Banks awoke the interest, informed the minds, and fired the fancies of a shining galaxy of brilliant scholars who, in their determination to exploit and classify the botanical and zoological curiosities and oddities of the Australian bush, incidentally opened up vast tracts of country, giving a new and ampler direction to Australian history. In their eagerness to add to the lustre of the sciences that they loved, they unconsciously, but incalculably, enriched the spacious theatre of their careful researches. Australia cherishes their names with jealous pride, but it cherishes even more the honoured name of the distinguished naturalist who first turned their attention to the scene of their ultimate triumphs. Capt. Cook and the great navigators, Lachlan Macquarie and the great administrators, can never be forgotten; but we cannot overlook the fact that their Homeric achievements were made possible by the modest but munificent services of a strong and silent man who was always happy to occupy a place in the background so long as the work was ably and effectively done.

Chapter 19

AN EPIC OF CHIVALRY

A GREAT weir in New South **Wales** has been named, after **Allan** Cunningham, the Cunningham Weir. It is pleasant to recall the audacious and memorable exploits of this gallant and engaging young explorer. Australians of all tastes and temperaments will like to be reminded of the heavy debt under which he placed these young lands. Scholars and scientists will think of him as a brilliant and painstaking botanist; practical men will reflect on his daring adventures in the realm of pathfinding; whilst young people, fond of stories of adventure, will recite with a new relish his hairbreadth escapes from a cruel death, sometimes at the hands of fierce and hostile blacks and sometimes from the penalties incidental to the penetration of the vast Australian deserts. But from whatever angle the student may approach this stirring and romantic page in our annals, he will recognize in **Cunningham** the type and pattern of a very gallant gentleman.

This hardy and resourceful young Scotsman came out to Australia under the auspices of Sir Joseph Banks. Sir Joseph, who had very largely financed the expeditions of Captain Cook, and who had accompanied ~~the redoubtable~~ navigator on his epoch-making voyages in the capacity of naturalist, developed, in his old age, an extraordinary flair for infecting younger men with his own unconquerable passion for exploration. **Mungo** Park, Lachlan Macquarie, and Sir John Franklin were among his most notable **protégés**. So was **Allan** Cunningham; and it was one of the immense **delights** of Sir Joseph's declining days to sit back in his easy chair and chuckle over Cunningham's adventures amidst the **untamed** and untrodden solitudes of the Australian continent.

Sir Joseph Banks's method of procedure was simplicity itself. Having fired the imagination of some ardent youth by telling of the unexplored territories that he had skirted with

Captain Cook, the old man used his influence with the king to secure for his new recruit some nominal position on the other side of the world. Thus, officially, Lachlan Macquarie was sent out by the king as Governor; in reality he was sent out by Sir Joseph Banks to organize an expedition to cross the Blue Mountains. In the same way, Allan Cunningham was sent out to Australia nominally to collect some new botanical specimens for His Majesty's conservatories at Kew Gardens. But it was always noticed that, although millions of acres of virgin bush were exposed to his scrutiny in country already charted, the plants that he most passionately coveted were always growing on the other side of ranges that had never been crossed, and beyond the vast expanses of deserts that no human foot had traversed! The nominees of Sir Joseph Banks all came out with a solemn commission authorizing them to shoot at the pigeon; but, as soon as they set foot on Australian soil, they immediately proceeded to take aim at the crow!

In her finely executed *History of the Early Explorers of Australia*, Mrs. Charles Bruce Marriott confesses to a special admiration for Allan Cunningham. She devotes more space to him than to any of the other pioneers. And with good reason. For the work of Cunningham stands related to the very dawn of Australian history. He trod in nobody's footprints. A new continent was spread at his feet. It was in 1817 that, the Blue Mountains having been crossed by Blaxland, Lawson, and Wentworth, Governor Macquarie determined to send out an expedition to open up the huge interior of the silent and unknown land. Over the mountains, rivers had been descried whose waters had flowed westward. What boundless plains did they irrigate? Into what seas did they empty themselves? Everybody was guessing, but nobody knew. Macquarie therefore despatched Oxley, the Surveyor-General, and Cunningham, the king's botanist, to investigate the intriguing problem. And thus the career of a great explorer, and the history of a great nation, simultaneously began.

Nobody can read a single page of Cunningham's most

fascinating journal without sharing his delight whenever he came upon a new species for the king's greenhouses. Moreover, he was just as anxious to enrich Australia as to be enriched by it. He always carried a bag of peach stones, and, wherever the soil was suitable, he sowed some. 'They may,' he writes, 'provide a meal for some famished European or some hungry blackfellow.' It would be difficult to compute the number of guests who have blessed Allan Cunningham for the table that he thus spread in the wilderness.

Few explorers have a prouder record. Some of the finest agricultural and pastoral areas in Australia, such as the Liverpool Plains and the Darling Downs, are among his discoveries. His diary contains passages that nobody can read without emotion. The sentences in which he describes his first glimpse of Cunningham's Gap; the pages in which he tells of his arrival on the Darling Downs; and the entry in which he records the sensational finding of the dead Oxley's journal, are among the most moving classics in Australian literature.

Absolutely destitute of fear, he plunged into the wildest and most barren territory; he knocked about the coast for years in a ramshackle old vessel that was utterly unseaworthy, making, in the course of these daring tours, discoveries which transformed the whole character of Australian life. Beneath the magic of his touch the continent assumed a startlingly new aspect. Having dared a thousand horrible deaths he passed peacefully away on June 27, 1839. His bones repose in the obelisk erected to his illustrious memory in the Botanical Gardens at Sydney; but he has bequeathed to posterity a name that Australia, at any rate, can never afford to neglect.

Chapter 20

ROMANCE OF A DICTIONARY

A HUNDRED years ago Noah Webster, the compiler of the famous dictionary, passed away. Descended on his father's side from John Webster, a pioneer governor of Connecticut, and on his mother's side from William Bradford, one of the leaders of the Pilgrim Fathers, Noah Webster was a man of original and outstanding gifts. In the 85 years of his remarkable career he was alternately farmer, lawyer, academician, politician and historian, but all through the years his mind was dominated by an insatiable curiosity as to the etymology and significance of words, and every odd moment was devoted to notes and memoranda embodying his latest discoveries. He found it a fascinating and inexhaustible study. For, after all, the world is an enormous word-factory and its output is prodigious. Every year, almost every week, brings a new crop of words. The vast majority of these words perish almost as soon as they are born. They are coined to fit a certain occasion and, being essentially ephemeral in their purpose and character, are quickly forgotten.

Others, however, appeal to a deeper instinct. They meet an obvious need, describe a certain quality that no dictionary word described so well, captivate the popular imagination, and, as a consequence, they live. A good dictionary is, as Coleridge said, the armoury of the human mind and contains both the trophies of its past, and the weapons of its future, conquests. In his classic *On the Study of Words*, Archbishop Trench has seven masterly chapters in which he shows that words are fossil poetry and petrified history and embalmed romance, and that all the ages have left the record of their tears and laughter, virtues and vices, passion and pain, in the words they have created.

Did not Ruskin urge his readers to delve in the dictionary like prospectors searching for gold? Just as, on the diggings,

the richest nugget may ravish the eyes of the miner when he is turning over the most common clay, so Ruskin held, the most astounding treasure may be found concealed in the heart of the most ordinary words. 'When I feel inclined to read poetry,' says Oliver Wendell Holmes, 'I reach down my dictionary. The poetry of words is quite as beautiful as that of sentences. The author may arrange the gems effectively, but their shape and lustre have been given by the attrition of age. Bring me the *finest* simile from the whole range of imaginative writing, and I will show you a single word which conveys a more profound, a more accurate, and a more elegant analogy.' It will be seen, then, that, properly understood and appreciated, words are jewel cases, treasure chests, **strong-**rooms; the repositories in which the archives of the ages are preserved.

Language is obviously an evolution. There was a time when even the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* declared that our first parents received it by immediate inspiration. In view of our present knowledge of the coinage and creation of words, **how-**ever, most people will feel that this can only have been true, at the most, to a very limited extent. With every momentous event in human history new words spring up like mushrooms on a misty **morning**. Most of these new words, as Sir Edward Cook once pointed out, are frankly onomatopoeic. They are, that is to say, mere imitations of sounds frequently heard. The deaf and dumb man imitates, by means of gestures, the things that he sees. The man who is not so **afflicted** imitates, on the same principle, the things that he hears. And these oral imitations crystallize into permanent augmentations of the vocabulary. Philologists assure us that we should be astonished if we were to discover the number of our common words that were originally imitations of sounds heard.

A child's first ventures in articulation are, as Prof. **Drum-**mond has pointed out, frankly imitative. He calls the cow a moo-moo, the dog a bow-wow, the duck a quack-quack, the rooster a cock-a-doodle-doo, the clock a tick-tick, the train a puff-puff, and so on. Nor does he drop the habit when he emerges from the nursery. In maturer years he still speaks of

the hum of the bee, the click of the gate, the whirl of machinery, the chirp of grasshopper, the twitter of the sparrows, the hiss of the snake, the boom of the cannon, the roar of thunder, the tramp of armies, and the rest. He is building up a vocabulary on that onomatopoeic principle to which Sir Edward Cook ascribes so many of the words in the dictionary.

Oddly enough most of our words come to us, not from the halls of learning, but from playgrounds and village greens. In her *Rustic Speech and Folklore*, Mrs. E. M. Wright maintains that it is an egregious mistake to suppose that country people, even when quite unlettered, possess limited vocabularies. She instances one district in which the local dialect contains more than a thousand words for giving a man a thrashing, a thousand words by which one man could tell another that he was a fool, 120 names for the smallest pig of a litter, and hundreds of names for a slut. 'And as for dying and getting drunk,' she adds, 'there is no number to be put upon the names for them.' In view of this facility, possessed by the most ordinary men, it is clear that the task of Noah Webster, a century ago, represented an undertaking of no small magnitude. 'Words, words, words!' moaned Hamlet in his dialogue with Polonius, and he said it as though words were things to be regarded with contumely and disdain. But if he, and those who think as he did, were to probe the matter as deeply as Noah Webster had to do, they would discover that, to an imaginative and adventurous mind, the manufacture of words offers a wealthy field for the play of curiosity and research.

A MAY DAY MEMORY

IF ever a man wore the white flower of a blameless life, it was Joseph Addison, whose name stands immemorially associated with May Day. No man made a greater impression on his own age, and a smaller impression on subsequent ages than did he. How is this *to* be explained? Everything conspired to make Addison an outstanding figure at the beginning of the eighteenth century. His very birth was tinged with romance. The merry month of May had broken upon England with blue skies and sparkling sunshine. In the tiny hamlet of Milston the May Day revels were at their height when it was whispered among the happy villagers that a baby had just been born in the thatched old parsonage near by. The young men and maidens who danced around the maypole on that Wiltshire green never guessed that the child just born *in* the dreamy old rectory among the elms was destined *to* effect a transformation in English life and literature.

Less than fifty years later, the baby who was born amidst the laughter of those May Day frolics was buried at dead of night amidst a nation's lamentations. By the ghostly light of torches and tapers he was borne to his resting place in the stately Abbey:

How silent do his old companions tread
By midnight lamps the mansions of the dead,
Through breathing statues, then unheeded ~~things~~,
Through rows of warriors and through walks of kings.

Thus, in 1719, Addison bade farewell to a world that was every way the better for his passage through it.

A quiet, thoughtful boy, as reflective as Milton and as timid as Cowper, Addison had the genius to perceive that there was a great work waiting to be done in the world, and he had the practical sagacity and intellectual energy to brace

himself for the enterprise. At the dawn of the eighteenth century English standards and English manners were at their lowest ebb. Politics had degenerated into an undignified squabble; society, like Parliament, was as corrupt as it could very well be; music, art, and literature were all degraded; the sports and pastimes of the people were universally squalid and usually obscene; religion itself had become formal, sanctimonious, and largely hypocritical. Addison saw clearly that the moment was made for him, and, like the architect of a new era, he carefully drafted his plans. Since our little race began, many men have embarked upon an attempt to straighten a perverse and crooked world; but very few have had the satisfaction of reviewing their enterprise with any marked degree of satisfaction. Addison's ideal was, however, realized in its entirety.

Twelve years before his birth the Restoration had swept Puritanism into oblivion, and Milton, in *Paradise Lost*, had chanted its requiem. Addison determined to recapture some, at least, of the priceless treasure that had been abandoned in the general overthrow; he resolved to rescue and re-establish something of the golden tradition that had been blurred in the devastating reaction. He did it. By all that he wrote, by all that he did, and especially by the knightly character that he developed, he attained his goal. He lived a *life* of stainless integrity; by his courtesy, his chivalry, and his modesty he endeared himself to the most eminent leaders of his time; he held, through evil report and through good, to his early resolves and aspirations; and he won for himself a name which all men delighted unfeignedly to honour.

Addison achieved his triumph in defiance of the heaviest possible handicap. His agonizing nervousness paralysed him. Although a member of Parliament and a Cabinet Minister, he could not muster courage to address the House. If he could have talked at Westminster as he talked at Button's coffee house, he would have bequeathed to posterity a reputation for oratory that would have eclipsed the shining records of Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, and Burke. But it was impossible. Just once he rose; stammered out one or two broken, confused

and incoherent sentences; blushed, coughed, apologized; sat down and never ventured a second attempt. He owed his amazing authority to two causes. His literary gift was so outstanding that Dr. Johnson urged all young writers to model their style on that of Addison. In days in which parliamentary speeches were not reported, and in which the orator could hope to influence none but those who actually heard his voice, a Prime Minister was glad to have in his Cabinet a man in whose unimpeachable integrity everybody trusted and who could lay the case for the Government before the people in pamphlets so cogent and persuasive as to make their perusal a delight.

A man of transparent sincerity and crystalline simplicity, Addison cherished a faith that matched the quality of his manhood. None of his literary productions is better known today than his familiar paraphrase of the Twenty-third Psalm: 'The Lord my pasture shall prepare, and feed me with a shepherd's care.' The psalm was his solace and his stay all through his pure, courageous life, and it poured its deathless music into his ear at the last. As he lay dying, his generous heart and sensitive conscience led him to crave the forgiveness of his friends for wrongs which they had never noticed or had long since forgotten. And then, at peace with all the world, he abandoned himself to the enjoyment of those boons and benedictions which his favourite psalm had so melodiously promised him. 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,' he murmured, 'I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.' He taught us, says Tickell, in his 'Elegy':

He taught us how to live and (oh, too high
The price of knowledge) taught us how to die.

Macaulay thought Addison incomparable. When he himself was borne to the Abbey for burial, he was interred at the foot of the Addison statue. He would have coveted no resting place more honourable.

BLACK FACE; GREEN FINGERS

AMERICANS of the days of Lincoln or Garfield would have thrown up their hands in pious horror, and stared at each other in speechless consternation, if some audacious prophet had foretold that, in the middle of the twentieth century, the Government of the United States would, almost simultaneously, honour a pair of negroes by issuing postage stamps bearing their images and superscriptions. In one way, Booker T. Washington and George W. Carver were as much alike as peas in a pod: in another way they differed as sharply as chalk differs from cheese. Both were born in slavery. As a sickly baby, George Carver and his mother were stolen from their owner's estate by a gang of ruthless raiders. Pursued, the bandits were induced, in exchange for a worn-out racehorse, to restore the baby, more of a liability than an asset to them, but the mother was never seen again.

Neither Washington nor Carver-the men immortalized on the postage stamps-ever saw their fathers; slaves seldom did. In both cases, the names that they bore were pure inventions. The two were alike, also, in their profound conviction, reached quite independently, that their kith and kin were heading for stark tragedy unless, by careful education and vocational training, they could be fitted for the freedom that they were destined to enjoy. And eventually the two men became associated on the faculty of the great university at Tuskegee that Booker Washington had established for the uplift and equipment of his people. Yet, whilst Washington was massive and muscular, Carver was a weedy, wizened wisp of a man who looked as if a puff of wind would blow him away. As a child he was puny; as a youth he was scraggy and undersized; and, in maturity, there was much in his appearance and demeanour to invite derision and contempt. Whilst Booker Washington looked a born commander, there

was nothing in the slight, shabby and shambling figure of Carver to convey the impression that he was one of earth's mightiest intellects, a natural master of men.

Waif as he was, Carver early betrayed a singularly sensitive and hungry mind. Wandering about the country in quest of any odd job that would provide some sort of sustenance and shelter, he walked every highway with wondering eyes wide open. At one farmhouse, in which he was left for an hour or two by himself, his curiosity prompted him to poke about in the big empty rooms. Suddenly he came on a gallery of family portraits. He had never before seen a painting. The glorious vision took his breath away. He felt that a man who could do such work must have been made in the image of God. To produce such treasures was to become a subsidiary Creator. He resolved to apply himself to the superb adventure. From that time his palette became the delight and the solace of his life.

But the sensational discovery of those early days was the discovery that, though he had a black face, he possessed green fingers. An inexplicable magic slept in his touch. He had but to tickle the most sterile plot and it laughed with abounding fertility. He seemed instinctively to understand plants and seedlings of every kind; and, in some mysterious way, they seemed to understand him. He knew, as if the earth had confided to him her secrets, exactly what kind of soil each separate growth required; and as soon as he picked up a handful of loam and sifted it through his fingers, he sensed what crop should be entrusted to it. His intuition in such matters was positively uncanny. By tireless industry and severe frugality, he earned the money that would open to him the college gates. As a student, and, later, as a teacher his genius astonished everybody. And then, he was, in 1916, appointed Professor of Agriculture at Tuskegee.

His golden hour struck when the southern planters found themselves in dire distress with their cotton crops. The fact was, of course, that the soil was sick of cotton. It had produced cotton, cotton,, cotton, year after year, until, in accordance with a well known principle of agriculture, it revolted against

the sickening monotony of the task imposed upon it. Carver advised the planters to change from cotton to peanuts, or, at least, to grow the two crops in rotation. Revering as gospel every word that fell from his lips, they soon produced such prodigious quantities of peanuts that the market was glutted and the growers were faced by ruin. Hurrying to his laboratory, Dr. Carver discovered 300 uses, varying from linoleum to cosmetics, to which the peanuts could be put. Thus he not only saved the cottonfields, but enormously augmented the industrial activities of his country. Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, and other magnates offered him princely salaries to join their organizations; but money made no appeal to him.

Moulded by a faith that was as simple and as strong as a granite pillar, Carver's life stood attuned to the lovely spirituals and lilting melodies for which his dusky race is famous. His Bible was his constant companion. He used to say that the transformation of the plantations began on the day on which, falling upon his knees, he asked God to tell him why He had created the peanut. Nature seemed eager to pour her secrets into his attentive ear. His favourite quotation was Tennyson's 'Flower in the Crannied Wall':

I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower, but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

Commanding the admiration of millions who never looked into his twinkling hazel eyes, Carver was loved with an almost passionate devotion by those associated with him. He died on January 5, 1943, and was laid to rest in the grassy plot where he and Booker Washington now slumber side by side.

A CATARACT OF BABIES

IT was on March 25, 1741, that Captain Coram, a plain, blunt old sea-captain, began a movement that has vitally affected every phase of human adventure and experience. Born in the days when Sir Christopher Wren was struggling to repair the havoc wrought by the Great Fire, and possessing no social or educational advantages of any kind, Thomas Coram became an ordinary able seaman. As a sailor he drifted about the world, making it his business to leave every country he touched the better for his visit. In Georgia, in Nova Scotia, and in Massachusetts he started movements for which, to this day, his name is held in honour; but all these preliminary ventures were eventually put in the shade by the historic enterprise to which he applied his powers in his later days.

On retiring from the sea, he took rooms at Rotherhithe on the Thames-side, living just such a life as old sailors usually live. In taking his morning stroll, however, the good captain made a discovery that sickened and appalled him. He seldom returned to his quarters for his modest morning meal without having seen, lying in the gutter, one or more babies that, unwelcome and unwanted, had been disposed of in this crude and heartless way. Some of them were dead; some were emaciated and at their last gasp; but many were alive and in excellent condition. Captain Coram made up his mind that the abominable practice must be stopped.

He at first attempted to heal this open sore by taking one or two of the most promising of the children under his own care and by inducing other men and women to follow his example. But it soon became obvious that so immense a malady could never be cured by so puny a panacea; the matter was of national importance; the public conscience must be aroused. The people must be made to feel and to act. Captain

Coram drew **up** a petition to Parliament. It is to the credit of the British people that, when a real need is brought under their notice, sympathies are swiftly stirred and practical assistance is cheerfully given. To Captain Coram's delight, the Foundling Hospital of London was incorporated by Royal Charter 'for the maintenance and education of exposed and deserted children'. But if Captain Coram imagined that, with this important step, all his problems had been solved, he was doomed to disillusionment.

He soon discovered to his dismay that he had abolished one evil only to make room for another. In his ***Eighteenth Century Vignettes***, Mr. Austin Dobson has tellingly depicted the confusion of the founder of the hospital as soon as its doors were, for the first time, opened. Once the existence of the institution became known, babies poured in from every corner of the kingdom. It became a lucrative trade, Mr. Dobson says, for carriers to convey infants from remote hamlets and villages to Captain Coram's hospital. On a single trip, one waggon brought eight to town, seven of whom were dead when they reached their destination. On another occasion, a man with five babies in baskets got drunk on the road and three of his unhappy charges were suffocated.

The inevitable outcome of all this was that the governors of the hospital found themselves utterly unable to cope with the battalions of babies that swooped down upon them from every point of the compass. They accordingly appealed to Parliament. Parliament voted them £10,000, but, in making the grant, still further disconcerted them by stipulating that they must receive all comers. A basket was hung at the gateway, on the very spot that the Coram statue afterwards occupied, and, on the first day of the appearance of this receptacle, 117 babies were dropped into it. In less than four years, 1 5,000 children were forwarded to the hospital, and the record grimly adds that 'a vile trade grew up among vagrants of undertaking to carry children from the country to the hospital, an undertaking which was seldom performed, or performed only with great cruelty'. In the early years of the hospital's existence, it was possible to coax only one child in

every four into surviving the injuries and handicaps that had marked its condition when admitted.

The institution, now housed at Berkhamsted, and still adorned by the noble statue of Captain Coram, still possesses many interesting links with the days of its stalwart founder. It treasures, for example, the organ presented to it by Handel in 1750, an instrument on which the eminent composer often played his 'Hallelujah Chorus'. Handel was very much in love with the work that Captain Coram was doing. In the beautiful chapel which Jacobson added to the hospital in 1747, Handel formed a choir of blind inmates who frequently rendered 'The Messiah' under the composer's own direction. And when, a few years later, Handel died, he bequeathed to the hospital a manuscript copy of his most magnificent oratorio. Hogarth, too, so much admired the unselfish and constructive work of Captain Coram that he painted for the hospital the imposing portrait of the captain, of which the institution is still inordinately proud. From this handsome canvas, as Mr. Dobson says, 'the ruddy, kindly face of the brave old mariner, with its curling white hair, still beams upon us'. For some years the nation's most brilliant artists arranged an annual exhibition of their paintings at the hospital; and it was this exhibition that led, in 1768, to the formation of the Royal Academy. At so many points does the sturdy personality of the old sea dog weave itself into our national story. Few men have done more than he to earn the grateful homage of their remote successors.

THE ILLUSIONS OF WINTER

IN the captivating programme of changing phases and **alternating** seasons, which the round of the year offers for our **entertainment**, winter plays the part of the Great Illusionist. Look, for example, at the role taken by her star performer, popularly known as Jack Frost. His repertoire contains the most incredible tricks. We have all heard of the Scandinavian traveller who, on being received at an Oriental court, regaled the king with the most audacious fictions that his fertile fancy could suggest. The simple-minded monarch believed every word and applauded vociferously. At length, the visitor's imagination flagging under the strain of invention, he was reduced to the humiliating necessity of telling the truth. 'In my country,' he declared, 'water is carried about in great blocks and . . .' But the king would hear no more. 'Ah, now I know that thou liest !' he exclaimed indignantly, and ordered the adventurer to be beheaded. His Majesty found the facts about the frost more difficult of credence than the most preposterous fictions relating to other things.

The frost masquerades. It pretends, for example, to be murderous. It is, Richard Jefferies asserts, the most ruthless of the slayers with which the creatures of the wild have to contend. It destroys the kingfisher on his perch and paralyses the swiftest hare. Jefferies could scarcely bear to walk round the fields after a sharp frost because of the agonizing deaths of which he everywhere saw evidence. But is the frost a destroyer of life? In an article on 'Weather and Health', a doctor tells a very different tale. 'In my district,' he says, 'we get all kinds of miserable little epidemics during the **autumn**, but one good hard frost cleans it up and the germs **perish** in billions.' The doctor's testimony exposed the illusion by which we might easily and pardonably have been duped.

Judging by superficial appearances, we should naturally

conclude that a spell of frost is a period of absolute stagnation. In its icy grip the earth seems dormant and dead. All its energies are palsied. There appears to be nothing doing. It is, of course, pure nonsense. Prof. Sir Edgeworth David has shown that the frost is an indefatigable worker. The frigid severities of remote geologic ages did more, he says, to batter the earth into shape than the accumulated sunshine of innumerable summers. During the ice age, plains were torn up, valleys were scooped out, and mountains were crushed out of existence as though they were molehills. Professor David shows that the character, climate and altitudes of these Australian lands have been determined almost entirely by the frost.

Especially was this the case here in Tasmania. 'My own idea,' the Professor says, 'is that the great ice ages, beginning about three hundred million years ago, piled a huge weight on one portion of Tasmania, bending down the earth's crust with a hinging movement near Bass Strait. The whole of Tasmania to the east of Mt. Lyell has been severely depressed.' And Sir Edgeworth goes on to say that, to the melting of the ice at the close of this geologic period we owe the rise of the ocean, the existence of Bass Strait and many of the most marked features of Australian life. By the titanic activities of the frost, islands have been submerged and continents smashed to splinters. Nor is Jack Frost resting on his laurels. He is still at work. Frank Buckland has shown that the white cliffs along the English downs are being constantly nibbled away by the frost. The whole contour of the coast is slowly but surely changing. And yet we say that the frost is the emblem of stagnation ! It is a cunning piece of make-believe. In reality, the frost is as active as quicksilver.

The frost often assumes an appearance of spiteful hostility; it nips and blights and withers. But before classifying it on that account as one of the antagonisms of life, it will be as well to consult the farmer. Or ask the gardener. The gardener looks ruefully upon his tomatoes and dahlias all blackened and spoiled; but he bears no malice. The frost plays havoc with the potatoes and the French beans, but see how it sweetens

the celery and the Brussels sprouts! Moreover, the soil itself is being incalculably enriched. Farmers and gardeners are quiet folk; they do not talk much or write much; but, lest their silence should be misconstrued, Mr. Amos R. Wells has taken up the pen on their behalf. He sings:

When the frost is in the ground, with its sharp silver pick,
It is digging and prospecting all around;
There are millions of brisk workers, ever eager, ever quick,
Ever toiling when the frost is in the ground.

Those familiar with life in the Homeland will remember how, on throwing up the blinds on winter mornings, the world was hidden by the frost upon the window pane. But, in the concealment of the landscape, imagination was born. Finding pictures in the frozen panes was like finding faces in the fire. Peter Martin, the great Lancashire designer, gathered the inspirations for his laces and tapestries from the delicate traceries that he found on the glass on frosty mornings. In his delineation of the fall of Wolsey, Shakespeare depicts the Cardinal, in the hour of his chagrin and mortification, telling Cromwell that he has been bitten by 'a frost, a killing frost'. And he continues:

O Cromwell, Cromwell !
Had I but served my God with half the zeal
I served my king, He would not in mine age
Have left me naked to mine enemies !

The poet's meaning is clear. In that tragic hour the fallen Chancellor discovered that the frost that leads us, in tearful contrition, to the God whom we have forgotten, and to a new realization of the preciousness of things unseen, is not so dire a calamity after all.

WIT AND WISDOM

WHEN, at the age of twenty-three, Sydney Smith was offered by the village squire a handsome salary to do nothing but tour the Continent with the young heir to the estates, imbibing at the various seats of learning the best that the most eminent European professors could impart, he felt that the gates of Paradise had suddenly opened. He could scarcely believe his ears. To travel with Michael, his favourite companion! To see Europe! To study at the best universities! It seemed incredible. To Mr. Hicks-Beach, the squire, his son was the light of his eyes; he coveted for him the best that money could buy. As he contemplated the handsome physique, fine features, polished behaviour, and magnetic personality of the youthful curate who had recently settled at Netheravon, he felt that if he could be secured as his son's companion, Michael's future would be assured.

For the next few months the two young men could talk of nothing else; every moment was spent in roseate anticipations and busy preparations. But, just as they were about to embark on the superb adventure, the unexpected happened. Napoleon Bonaparte arose; and the gates of the Continent were slammed in their faces. Instead of crossing the Channel, they set out for Scotland; and anybody who scans the subsequent career of Sydney Smith will recognise that Edinburgh contributed far more to the making of the man than the capitals of Europe could have done. The journey north, taken in easy stages, was itself an entrancing experience. In this atmosphere, Sydney's mind and personality developed amazingly.

It was in Edinburgh that Sydney Smith met Francis Jeffrey; and, during a wild, wintry evening by the fireside, suggested the establishment of the *Edinburgh Review*. Jeffrey was dubious, but eventually the journal was brought into being

and was soon able to command the services of the most brilliant writers of the day. It was in its pages that Macaulay inaugurated his notable career. But, among all these able contributors, Sydney Smith was never thrown into the shade. He wrote in all about eighty articles for the *Review*; they were universally recognized as among the best; indeed, Professor Minto describes them as the very perfection of journalism. He was, moreover, the most brilliant talker of his time. From his youthful days in Edinburgh, when Sir Walter Scott revelled in his company, to his later days in London when Charles Dickens delighted in his society, the outstanding figures in Church and State embraced any opportunity of spending an hour with him. No visitor was more welcome at Holland House. Statesmen, poets, soldiers and bishops alike coveted the opportunity of meeting him.

As Lord John Russell, Thomas Moore and a score of others have recorded, he never monopolized the conversation, never talked other people down, never allowed his scintillating wit and fondness for fun to degrade his dignity; and, whilst the most caustic of critics, he never became venomous or malicious. Possessing a fine sense of other people's feelings, he never uttered a word that rankled. His victims often laughed most heartily at his clever jests. Later in life, he became one of England's most popular and most powerful preachers. The humour that, at ordinary times, sparkled in every syllable of his conversation, was kept under severe restraint; he developed a power of pathos by means of which, on suitable occasions, he moved his congregations to tears. His entire utterance was marked by elegance, rhetoric, and fervour. His stately figure, snow-white hair, finely-chiselled features and piercing eyes, aided by his musical and perfectly modulated voice, created an impression which could never be forgotten. Many of his sermons aroused general interest, whilst his pulpit appeal to the newly crowned young queen to abhor war and dedicate her commanding authority to the enthronement of peace was regarded as a classic.

Yet, although a popular idol and the glittering ornament of the princeliest drawing-rooms, Sydney was a great home-

bird. In his masterly *Smith of Smiths*, Hesketh Pearson shows that it was in the home that Sydney was at his golden best. His wife and family hated the days on which his duties tore him from them. He used to say that he reached the summit of earthly felicity when, for two hours at a stretch, he could keep the children and their mother in fits of laughter. The death of his boy, Douglas, nearly broke his heart; he never recovered from that desolating blow. His servants worshipped the ground he trod and would never leave him. A podgy little girl whom he nicknamed Bunch, and whom he engaged for his first rectory, remained with him to the last, attending him on his deathbed. Was there ever a gem of so many facets? He learned farming, and actually worked a farm, that he might sympathize with the farmers in his parish; he studied law that he might settle the people's quarrels; he pursued a medical course that he might help the sick; he educated his own boys, and, in Yorkshire, he built his own vicarage.

All through life, he loved London and found it difficult to be perfectly happy anywhere else. Country life was, to him, mere vegetation. But towards the end, his emotions changed. The loveliness of rural England enchanted him. He detected a beauty in trees and fields and birds and flowers that had previously escaped him. One bright sunny morning he stopped suddenly to admire a crocus lifting its head above the snow. He gazed *in rapture*. 'The resurrection!' he murmured ecstatically, 'the resurrection!' And, shortly afterwards, his death caused more sorrow, among high and low, rich and poor, young and old, than any death since Byron's.

HISTORIAN OF A HAMLET

WHEN we recall the crystalline character and fruitful career of Gilbert White of Selbourne we seem to invade a particularly **colourful** and fragrant pleasance. Gilbert White lived the uneventful life of an obscure country parson, courting neither wealth, popularity, nor fame. In a village he was born; in that **selfsame** village he was destined to die; and in its drowsy quietude most of his days were spent. But among the daisied fields and primrosed woods of Selbourne-fields and woods in which the bees took him into their confidence, and the birds whispered into his ear their subtle **secrets**—Gilbert White discovered a spacious universe, a universe that ravished his heart and satisfied his soul.

Of explorers there are two kinds—those who explore extensively and those who explore intensively. The one moves among vast continents and scattered archipelagos, marking the position of each upon a chart. The other contents himself with a piece of land scarcely larger than a pocket handkerchief; but examines each blade of grass and each grain of sand so thoroughly that science is incalculably enriched by his research. James Cook and Gilbert White were boys together. And whilst, a few years later, Capt. Cook was opening up a new **hemisphere**, Gilbert White was closely examining the copse, the **hedgerow**, and the winding lanes that converged upon the village green. While the one was pushing his keel into unknown seas, sailing under familiar stars, meeting untutored barbarians who had never previously gazed upon a white face, and surveying landscapes luxuriating in vegetation that was entirely novel, **the** other was patiently observing the movements of the cuckoo, the habits of the water **rat**, the ways of the viper, the markings of the whitethroat, the operations of the earthworm, and the eccentricities of the martin, the swallow, the **blackcap** and the nightingale. And today

the fruits of both enterprises—Cook's *Voyages* and White's *Natural History of Selbourne*—stand side by side among our most treasured classics. And, in his famous list of the hundred best books ever written, Sir John Lubbock finds a place for both of them.

To each of those two men the realm that he had chosen to explore was fairyland, a world of wonders, a sphere of glittering enchantment. Cook, among his coral reefs and green atolls and blue lagoons and cannibal islands, would have looked with disdain upon the circumscribed character of the Hampshire parson's puny world; but not for all the wealth of the Indies would White have changed places with the intrepid navigator. His tranquil existence never for a moment palled upon him. One has only to read his letters in order to feel the glow of that fervid enthusiasm which every object in tilth and pasture awoke within him. Capt. Cook can scarcely have felt more excitement over the picturesque paradises that he discovered in the Pacific than Gilbert White felt in investigating the methods of the migratory birds, the different ways in which the squirrel eats his hazel nuts, the booming of the bittern, and in tracing the haunts of the kingfisher.

The letters that he wrote to his friends, Thomas Pennant and Daines Barrington, though the product of his mature years, read at times like the vehement scribblings of an excited schoolboy. He finds a feather under a beech tree; with almost childish glee he sends it post-haste to Mr. Pennant for his opinion; and, so feverish is his impatience for his friend's reply, he can scarcely eat or sleep until it arrives. He pens his descriptions of glow-worms and dragonflies with the exactitude and the gravity with which Capt. Cook would chart a continental coastline.

Gilbert White was essentially a villager among villagers. It never occurred to him that he was a naturalist. The idea of printing his notes never entered his mind. He was seventy when his friends suggested the startling idea. He laughed it to scorn. Nothing could convince him that the game was worth the candle. What had he done? He had simply **pottered**

about the fields, poked his way through the bracken, and, **listening** to the call of the birds and the sough of the wind, had waited with quick ears for the faintest breathing of some shy woodland dweller. And, if a hare came bounding along the furrow, or a weasel popped out of its hole at the elm tree bole, or a mottled thrush came hopping across the open green sward, or a rook flew, cawing, to its nest, the delighted observer had simply made a careful note of the romantic adventure and described it ecstatically to his friends.

Although of **singularly** sweet and gracious personality, he never married; but the fondness with which he dotes on the beauty of the beeches that compose his favourite retreat—their shapely forms; their smooth bark; their glossy foliage and their lissome and pendulous boughs—is reminiscent of the ardent and lingering affection with which a lover speaks of the beauty of his lady's face and the ripe loveliness of her figure. The art of Gilbert White was, first and foremost, the art of a villager. He was utterly destitute of self-consciousness. Had he, in his woodland walks, recognized in himself an eminent naturalist; or had he, for a **single** moment, suspected that those free-and-easy notes of his would crystallize into an English classic, everything would have been spoiled. One wonders what the shy little cleric would have thought if he could have foreseen that, a century and a half after his death, people in all parts of the world would be reading the book that he so diffidently published. As it is, he captivates us **by** his perfect innocence, his exquisite restfulness, and his unaffected simplicity. We listen to his voice with the delight with which we feast our eyes upon the village **green** or watch **the** movements of the fallow deer in the woodland glade. There is not much wrong with a world that keeps a place in its heart for Gilbert White.

AN EPIC OF DEVOTION

NEVER since the world began has a group of men, engaged on a hazardous venture and facing desperate odds, become so devotedly attached to one of their number as the Polar party led by Captain Scott became attached to Dr. Edward Thomas Wilson. Wilson was the one man whose presence Scott regarded as absolutely indispensable to the success of the expedition; he was his leader's constant companion; he stood beside Scott in that poignant moment in which they discovered that Amundsen had beaten them to the Pole; and he sat next to Scott in that melancholy tent from which Captain Oates walked out into the blizzard and in which the others, having completed their journals and written their last letters, settled down to die. During both his visits with Scott to the Antarctic, in 1901 and 1910, he was not only doctor, naturalist, artist and general adviser, but he was a kind of father-confessor to every member of the party. They all loved him, believed in him, poured their secrets into his sympathetic ear, sought his shrewd counsel on matters of the utmost privacy, and would cheerfully have sacrificed life itself for his sake.

Scott himself worshipped the ground that Wilson trod. 'He is,' Scott declared, 'the finest character I ever met; the closer one gets to him, the more there is to admire; every quality is so solid and dependable.' 'If,' wrote Scott, a few years after the first expedition and a few years before the second, 'if ever I go South again, there is no one in the world I would sooner have with me than you.' And, among the last tragic records, Scott simply overflows with his enthusiastic testimony to the energy, tact and superb unselfishness of Wilson. 'He is beloved by us all,' the leader writes; 'he wields the power of an oracle. He has proved himself a greater treasure than even I expected to find him.' Without an excep-

tion, all the other members of the party express themselves in similar terms.

Wilson started well. Born at Cheltenham in 1872, his father and mother were determined that he should be denied nothing that could make for his happiness and prosperity. In some of his last letters he says that, if his parents had known the destiny that awaited him, they could not have trained him more suitably for his life work. He was encouraged to note with precision all that he observed in his *rambles* among the fields; the portraits and statue at Cheltenham School bear eloquent witness to the laurels that he won in the classroom. His penchant for sketching everything that caught his eye was fostered with such success that when, between his two *expeditions*, he gave an exhibition of his paintings in the Bruton Galleries in London, the place was crowded during the three weeks in which the pictures were on display.

The scion of a long line of Quaker ancestors, Wilson was at heart a deeply religious man. Except in intimate and confidential letters, he said very little about his convictions. In him, faith was always incarnate but seldom articulate. His ideal was Francis of Assisi, the subject of one of his best paintings. He carried his New Testament, his Prayer Book and his 'In Memoriam' with him, even on the dash to the Pole. At sea, his companions often wondered why he was so fond of clambering up to the crow's nest. But his wife, Oriana Souper -whom he had married just before embarking on his first expedition and after whom he named several of his geographical discoveries-perfectly understood. 'I simply love the crow's nest, my private chapel,' he tells her, in one of his beautiful bursts of confidence. 'I have spent the happiest times you can possibly imagine there, alone with God and with you. Nothing above but the sky: nothing below but the sea and the ice: I just love it.' That dizzy *cubby-hole* at the masthead was his sanctuary, and, so far as spiritual communion with his wife was concerned, his *trysting place*.

But, although he kept this side of things very much to himself, it permeated and dominated all his thought. It

inspired his great adventure. In one of the few poems that he is known to have penned, he wrote:

The silence was deep with a breath like sleep,
 As our sledge runners slid on the snow;
 And the fateful fall of our fur-clad feet
 Struck mute like a silent blow;
 And this was the thought that the silence wrought,
 As it scorched and froze us through—
 Though secrets hidden are all forbidden
 Till God means man to know,
 We might be the men God meant should know
 The heart of the Barrier snow.

His journals, which now repose in the British Museum, abound in evidence of the lofty aspiration and the passionate consecration that underlay his daring, his comradeship, and his unquenchable humour.

In several of his letters, written whilst death was staring him in the face, Scott gives Wilson credit for preserving, under the most adverse circumstances, the harmony and geniality of the party. Scott had good cause to appreciate Wilson's skill in this regard. George Seaver tells of the way in which, during the first expedition, Scott had allowed one member of the group to get on his nerves, with the result that his attitude towards this man was less tolerant and less tactful than it should have been. Subjected, as they all were, to the terrific and continuous strain of their brave adventure, all the men saw the disastrous possibilities of the position. Somebody should speak to Scott. But who was to beard the lion? At length, Wilson undertook the ordeal. Dreading the issue, he sought his leader, said his say, and was relieved beyond measure when Scott rose, grasped his hand, and murmured: 'Thanks, Bill!' It was noticed that, ever after, Scott's face brightened at Wilson's approach; and when, twelve years later, the two bodies were found amidst the ice, Scott's arm was flung affectionately across the body of Wilson.

A LOVER OF QUIET CORNERS

TOMORROW marks the anniversary of the death, in **1471**, of the author of one of the most extraordinary books ever written. Thomas à Kempis was born in 1380. His masterpiece was published in the year in which he died, so he tasted nothing of fame. Yet, during the four centuries that followed, over 6,000 separate editions appeared, and, today, translated into every known language, it is being reprinted and distributed in every part of the world.

The first English version was, at the command of Margaret, mother of Henry VII, prepared by Canon Atkinson in 1502. For some strange reason that is more easy to trace than to explain, the book has appealed to all sorts and conditions of men. Equally appreciated by Protestants and Catholics, as well as by those who stand attached to neither faith, it gathers into itself, as Dean Milman says, all that is elevating, passionate and profound in the older mystics, and touches real life at almost every point.

Unhappily, very little is known about the author. Entering the old Augustinian monastery at Agnetenberg, in the Netherlands, at the age of twenty-seven, he lived there a life that was singularly colourless and uneventful. He describes himself as a lover of books and quiet corners. Although Europe was a cloud of dust, convulsed in storm and tumult, with wars raging and thrones tottering, he lived his patient life of introspection and contemplation.

He was, Prof. T. M. Lindsay says, a little fresh-coloured man, with soft brown eyes, who had a way of stealing away to his silent cell whenever the conversation became too lively. Normally, his frame was bowed and bent, but he had a habit of standing bolt upright when the psalms were being chanted, and, under stress of spiritual elation, he would even rise on tiptoe till he appeared almost tall.

Lovers of *The Mill on the Floss* are not likely to forget George Eliot's description of the sensational experience that came to Maggie Tulliver at a most critical moment in her career. The chapter is appropriately entitled 'A Voice from the Past'. Maggie is in desperate straits. Her mind is in torture; her faith flags and almost fails. Woman-like, she attempts to steady her nerves by an orgy of tidying-up. In a high cupboard, long neglected, she chances upon a pile of musty-f&y old books, coated with dust and yellow with age. Picking one at random, Maggie finds it is a well worn copy of *The Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas à Kempis. It has the corners turned down at many places, while every here and there passages are marked, underlined and annotated. The ink has turned brown with the passing of the years, but is still clear.

George Eliot says a strange thrill shot through Maggie's frame as she read these marked sentences. as if she had been wakened in the night by a strain of solemn music, telling of beings whose souls had been astir while hers was lost in stupor. Oblivious of time, oblivious of everything, Maggie passed from one brown mark to another, as the quiet hand pointed, hardly conscious that she was reading. She seemed to be simply listening to some still, small voice whispering to her out of the eternities. The words met her case and wonderfully soothed and fortified her broken spirit. She felt that, in company with some sturdy ancestor of her own, who had possibly slumbered in his grave for 100 years or more, she had been sitting at the feet of this devout old monk who, in the peaceful hush of his cloister, had conceived these gracious thoughts and committed them to paper half a thousand years ago.

This episode from George Eliot is typical. For the really extraordinary thing about *The Imitation* is its ability to appeal to men and women of such vastly different types. In his *Sacred and Profane Love*, Arnold Bennett pays tribute to the penetrating influence of the book upon the strange life of his beautiful heroine, Carlotta Peel. Ian Maclaren has testified to its hold on Scotland, and Mr. Wesley was deeply moved by it.

General Gordon, too, made Thomas à Kempis his constant

companion. However light he was compelled to travel, he would never leave *The Imitation* behind. And we all like to remember that, during those bleak October days of 1915, when Nurse Edith Cavell languished in her wretched prison at Brussels, awaiting execution, she cherished as her greatest solace her little copy of *à Kempis*. In her last moments she begged that, after her death, it might be sent to her cousin, Mr. E. D. Cavell, who received it three years later.

How are we to account for this universal appeal? Why is it, George Eliot asks, that this small, old-fashioned book, for which you need only pay sixpence, works miracles in human lives, turning bitter water into sweetness, while expensive volumes, newly issued, leave all things as they were before? 'It is,' she says, 'because it was written by a hand that waited for the heart's promptings. It is the chronicle of a solitary, hidden anguish with its struggle, its trust, and its triumph. It was not written on velvet cushions to teach endurance to those who are treading with bleeding feet life's jagged stones.'

And just because it sprang from the throbbing depths of a noble soul, it will touch the hearts of all who read it as long as the world stands. The placid, kindly, fresh-coloured old man who wrote his book before Columbus discovered the Western world never dreamed that the songs of the birds in the trees around his fifteenth-century convent would be broadcast through its pages to all the continents and islands, nor that the perfume of the flowers of his monastery garden would, by means of his manuscript, be wafted about the world till earth's last sun shall set.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THOUGHT

FROM time immemorial, August 28 has been regarded as sacred to the memory of Augustine of Hippo, who died on that day more than fifteen centuries ago.

Quite apart from his position *in* the ecclesiastical calendar, Augustine has countless claims on the reverence and gratitude of posterity. His *Confessions* stands as the first, and, in some respects, the greatest of autobiographies. Sir John Lubbock places it ninth in his famous list of the best 100 books ever written. Many men have made as great a mark on their own time as did he; but no other man has exercised his authority for so long. Principal John Tulloch declares that no single name has ever exercised such power over the centuries, and that no one mind has ever made so indelible an impression on subsequent thought. Dr. Tulloch adds that, for more than 1,000 years, scholars of all kinds, creeds and classes have acknowledged their indebtedness to the depth and clarity of Augustine's convictions, and to the strength, solidity and penetration with which he handled the most difficult questions, weaving all the elements of his variegated experience into a noble system of thought.

He began badly. He ran away from his North African home, leaving a trail of dishonour behind him, and nearly breaking the heart of Monica, his mother, in the process. Our first clear glimpse of him is at Rome. He is a tall fellow of thirty, of swarthy skin, dark earnest eyes, jet-black hair, and lean, emaciated features. The historic splendours of the eternal city fascinate him. There is a glamour about every arch and column. Yet his stay is but brief. Soon after his arrival he hears that, in Milan, there is a vacancy for a professor of rhetoric. It is the position of which he has always dreamed. Travelling north through the picturesque Italian countryside, he seeks and obtains the appointment.

It often happens that the biggest thing in even the **biggest** city is the commanding personality of one man. As, in the great after-years, Augustine looked back on his coming to Milan, the towering figure of Ambrose the Bishop seemed to dominate the horizon. Ambrose was just the man for Augustine. Incidentally, he was renowned for his rhetoric, and Augustine regarded oratory as the queen of the arts. Excitedly, the newcomer seized the first opportunity of hearing him. He could have wished that his hero were something other than a bishop, but Augustine pocketed his prejudices in that regard in order to hear one who was a natural master of great assemblies.

'I was anxious to see,' Augustine says, 'whether his eloquence was really as wonderful as had been reported.' Ambrose rose, and, almost instantly, Augustine was electrified. He sat spellbound. As a professor of rhetoric himself, he realized that, in Ambrose, he had met a perfect expositor of the orator's craft.

But, besides winning his wholehearted admiration, Ambrose affected Augustine in two important ways. He became conscious of a passionate desire to meet Ambrose and to form his personal friendship. And, the eloquence of Ambrose having achieved the purpose for which all oratory is designed, he found his mind in a ferment of curiosity and concern in relation to the exalted themes on which Ambrose so earnestly discoursed.

His wish was gratified. In due course, **meet.ing** Ambrose, his hero-worship was intensified by the intimate experience of contact and conversation. And, his hungry mind applying itself with avidity to the sacred literature to which Ambrose directed him, he found his outlook on life **positively** transfigured.

History abounds in illustrations of the **way** in which a master, by personal contact with a disciple, will light a torch that illumines the world with a brighter light than he himself has ever been able to radiate. But there are few such triumphs that can compare with the achievement of Ambrose. Under the influence of these sensational happenings Augustine wrote

to his mother, Monica, begging her to join him in Milan. She came.

One beautiful afternoon, soon after Monica's arrival, Augustine was sitting with Alypius, a friend of his boyhood, who had also followed him to Milan, in a delicious garden overlooking the **most** attractive suburbs of the city. Alypius had fallen under the same uplifting influences that had so profoundly stirred the heart of his friend.

'We agreed,' Augustine writes in his classical autobiography, 'to spend our lives in a most ardent search after truth and wisdom. Like me he sighed; like me he walked; an earnest seeker after true life and a most acute examiner of the most difficult questions. He loved me because I seemed to him kind and learned, and I loved him for his gentleness and modesty and virtue.'

The exquisite passage in which Augustine tells of the ecstatic climax of this patient search stands, with parallel passages in the personal confidences of Dante, Teresa, Bunyan, Newton and Wesley, as one of the choicest treasures of all literature.

Monica did not long survive her illustrious son's dedication of himself to his life-work. 'My son,' she says softly, as they sit together at a window in Ostia, 'I know not to what end I linger here. I had but one deep and fond desire, and that desire has been abundantly gratified, There is no reason why I should tarry longer.'

They remain together at the window until the bright sunshine and the lengthening shadows have alike departed.

A week later Augustine turns sadly but gratefully from his mother's quiet resting-place, and commences the work that has made him one of the most potent, one of the most salutary, and one of the most sublime forces in the history of the world.

Chapter 30

A KNIGHTLY CRUSADER

ON this, the birthday of John Howard, the prison reformer, it is interesting to reflect that, although the aisles of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, are now adorned by some of the most perfect masterpieces of the world's most eminent sculptors, the first statue to be admitted to that sacred edifice was his. The circumstance is symbolic, for Howard was ever a pioneer. He did a work peculiarly his own in a way peculiarly his own. Yet he embarked on his great historic enterprise without premeditation and without plan. On November 1, **1755**, the world heard with horror that the capital of Portugal had been destroyed by earthquake.

In the hour of her desolating calamity, Lisbon looked to London. At that bleak moment, Howard, a youth in his twenties, was sitting beside the body of his dead wife. He resolved to seek consolation in action. He would visit the stricken city and administer relief with his own hands. But England and France were at war. His ship was captured by a French privateer and all its passengers were *flung* into prison. The dungeon in which Howard found himself was 'a horrible hole, dark, damp and filthy beyond description'. After a spell of ravenous starvation, a leg of mutton was tossed to the prisoners in the cell, much as flesh is dropped into a den of wild beasts; and, like wild beasts, they tore at it until every morsel had been greedily devoured. They *slept* on the bare *stones*. This bitter and degrading experience set Howard thinking. Was it possible, he wondered, that all prisoners were subjected to such horrors? He would make it his business to *find* out.

The discoveries that he made in the course of *these* voyages of exploration must, in our time, appear utterly incredible. In all the gaols of Europe he found the wretched inmates, regardless of sex, herded together in one vile and cavernous

chamber, with nothing in the shape of light, ventilation or sanitation. The odour of such foul gehennas was so sickening that, after leaving them, Howard could never enter a room, or even a public vehicle, until he had bathed and changed his clothes. The fevers and pestilences that broke out in these horrid holes were so frightful that they not only swept away the prisoners in hundreds, but spread to the **officials**, the crowds in the courts, and even to the judges themselves. Howard often found among the prisoners the bodies of those who had been dead for days. It was no uncommon thing for a man to be torn to pieces by rats. The prison officials received no salaries; indeed, they paid as much as £40 a year for their positions. They reaped their recompense in the fees that they wrung from their victims. No inmate could escape torture, or obtain the slightest shadow of comfort except by paying the gaoler.

To make matters worse, the innocent suffered with the guilty. 'For,' says Howard, 'the thing that moved me most was the sight of those who had been found not guilty, and even those against whom no charge could justly be laid, suffering the same penalties as the most hardened and desperate criminals. After being **confined** for months awaiting trial, these unfortunates, though acquitted, were again dragged back to gaol and locked up with other prisoners until they should pay the fees that they owed the governor, the gaoler, the clerk of **assize**, the turnkey, and so on.' Debt, too, was as much a crime as burglary. At Cardiff, Howard found that a man had just died, after rotting for ten years in a loathsome cell, for owing £7 to a tradesman. The whole thing, as Green says in his *Short History of the English People*, was a perfect chaos of cruelty.

Realizing that a problem so stupendous needed a strong spiritual dynamic, Howard entered into a **secret**: but solemn Covenant of Consecration with God, a covenant which he periodically reviewed and renewed. Thus fortified, and with a case so unanswerable, he quickly caught the ear of the public. He had scarcely made his voice heard when a bill was introduced into Parliament. He was called **to** the Bar of the House

and thanked for directing attention to so ghastly an evil. Thus encouraged, he went abroad to inspect the prisons of the Continent and to initiate the same salutary movement in every land. No personal danger deterred him. He made his way to the Bastille, the French galleys, the prisons of the Spanish Inquisition and the lazarettos of Turkey. He often entered dungeons that were infected by the Plague. He simply knew no fear. He did his work quietly, but he did it **efficiently**; and it soon began to tell.

He made no fuss and courted no publicity. As his **biographer** says, he never talked with Johnson, dined with Fox, **had** his portrait painted by Reynolds, or attracted the notice of Gibbon. But he built the first model cottages, founded the first village schools, exposed the nightmare of the gaols, transformed the hospitals, reconstructed the workhouses, ameliorated the lot of all prisoners-of-war, and travelled the highways and byways of Europe to heal the sick, feed the hungry, and set the captive free. At his own cost and at his own risk, he appeared before Parliament, pleaded with emperors and kings, and prosecuted his **brave** crusade. The inevitable happened. Contracting a malignant fever in Russia, he died in 1790 at the age of sixty-four. 'Suffer no pomp to attend my funeral,' he begged. 'Lay me quietly in my grave; place a plain slab of marble over my head bearing the inscription: "John Howard: my hope is in Christ".' The whole world mourned. Never before had so many nations wept for the passing of an Englishman. John Wesley, who died shortly afterwards, declared that Howard was the greatest man of his time. Statues and memorials sprang up everywhere. 'Whoever thou art,' reads the inscription on his grave, 'thou art standing at the tomb of thy friend!' That eloquent but just tribute sums up everything!

A NATION'S SANCTITIES

IT was on the fourth of September, in **1666**, that the great Fire of London reached its dramatic climax by destroying Old St. Paul's. The bewildered citizens who had watched **the** tornado of flame as, hour by hour, it spread with **incredible** speed and fury, licking **up** in its relentless progress institutions that had been revered for centuries, scarcely conceived it **pos-**sible that the grand old cathedral could be involved in the general destruction. But the devouring element left its lordliest victim to the last. London realized with speechless awe that St. Paul's was ablaze. The sight, we are assured, was the most weirdly magnificent that human eyes had ever seen. The entire edifice was one vast sheet of flame. And thus, as John Evelyn, with 'infinite concern', records in his famous diary, there was reduced to ashes that most venerable church, one of the most ancient pieces of early piety in the Christian world.

No antiquarian can trace the time when that charred spot on which Londoners then gazed in dismay was not held in sanctity and reverence. Long before our history-books began, a temple to Diana crowned that commanding knoll. In days when the grouse scurried through the undergrowth that concealed the site of Ludgate Circus; **when** the heron and the bittern haunted the reeds that waved where the Embankment now stands; when herds of deer grazed among the succulent grasses that luxuriated on the open spaces that the Royal Exchange, the Mansion House and the Bank of England now occupy; when the baying of wolves was **heard** from the thickly-timbered heights of Tower Hill; and when the otter fished for salmon from the broken boulders and fallen **trees** that were afterwards cleared away to make room for Billingsgate Market; white-robed priests **practised** their ghostly rites among the oaks and **elms** and beeches that clothed the **pic-**

turesque hillsides that sloped down to the green banks of the broad and silvery stream.

Old St. Paul's was part of the adventurous romance of '1066 and all that'. Within twenty years of their conquest, the Normans made up their minds to achieve superb magnificence on Ludgate Hill. They did. In our natural pride in the stately cathedral that now adorns the heart of the Empire, we are apt to forget the still more imposing building that perished in the Fire that followed the Plague. No spire in England today, not even Salisbury, can compare with the spire of Old St. Paul's. Nor do we realize its profound influence on English life and manners. With its immense nave of twelve bays, its vast choir containing another twelve, and its transept which was as large in itself as many of our existing cathedrals, it dominated the whole horizon, and made the most pretentious buildings in the city look like dolls' houses in comparison.

The staff of the old cathedral may have had their doubts as to whether it was always treated with the reverence that its glories seemed to demand. Its very immensity militated against its sanctity. Its spacious nave gradually came to be recognized as a public thoroughfare; it was a favourite trysting-place for lovers and a rendezvous for business men. Lawyers there met their clients, and carnival parties met in Paul's Walk, as it was called, before setting out on their revels and entertainments. After a while, stalls were introduced; fruit and vegetables were sold in the cathedral aisles; whilst bakers, smiths, carpenters and others plied with impunity their various trades. Horses and mules were ridden and led through the building, whilst unseemly quarrels and even drunken brawls were by no means unknown.

As the old cathedral neared the day of its doom, still stranger scenes were witnessed within its walls. Cromwell turned it into a barracks, stabling his cavalry within the sacred precincts. In the days of the Black Death it was turned into a hospital. It was several times struck by lightning; it was once burned almost to the ground and carefully rebuilt; but it held its dominating place in the hearts of Londoners until that memorable fourth of September when the Great Fire

made an end of everything. During that week of horror a square mile of buildings was reduced to a black desert of cinders.

Christopher Wren was thirty-four at the time. The conflagration kindled his genius. Jealous for the beauty of the metropolis, Wren recognized in the disaster a priceless opportunity. Four days after the last flames had been extinguished, he sought an audience of the king and laid before him a comprehensive plan for a new city. The performance stands as one of the most bewildering triumphs of architectural history; and nobody has quite forgiven the short-sighted authorities of that stagnant period for rejecting the scheme so swiftly and brilliantly conceived. Parts of the plan, including the designs for the re-erection of St. Paul's Cathedral, and of about **fifty** other churches, were accepted, and the beauty of those completed fragments only tantalizes the imagination of posterity by giving fleeting visions of what might have been had the entire scheme been carried into effect. It is said that when, amidst the charred debris, Wren was seeking the spot that was to represent the centre of the dome of his new cathedral, he ordered a workman to mark the exact place that he eventually chose. The man glanced around for some object suited to the purpose and hit upon a fragment of a shattered tombstone. The splinter bore one word of the broken epitaph-Resurgam! (I shall rise again!) In that word Wren heard the voice of the ruined cathedral: and the word is not without heartening significance for us as we survey the wreckage of civilization today. If the Christian faith teaches anything, it teaches the essential deathlessness of goodness. That is the dominating thought of Easter, the Church's supreme festival; and it is to that sublime thought that we cling when we take farewell of those whom **we** have loved long since and lost awhile. A new spring must emerge from the bleakest winter; new life springs from **death**: the world's choicest treasure is imperishable.

Chapter 32

THE EPIC OF THE HIGHWAY

IT was on October 17, in the year 1824, that Hamilton Hume and his companions set out on the expedition that, more than any other, gave colour to Australian history. Hume was a pioneer of pioneers. He was the first of the overlanders. When he left Sydney to penetrate an empty continent, a new day dawned. Until then, Australia was less a land than a locality. Hume's name will always fall musically on Australian ears. He was not only an Australian explorer; he was an Australian. In the nature of the case, most of our pathfinders were men who had come from the Homeland: Hume was a native. As a small boy, he displayed an extraordinary genius for discovering a way through vast and trackless solitudes. He and his brother would be swallowed up in the virgin forest for weeks at a time, and he was still in his teens when he achieved his first notable triumph. Indeed, he was only twenty-six when he embarked upon the enterprise that has cast a lustre about his honoured name.

Endowed with that uncanny vision of the years-to-be which constitutes itself the spiritual equipment of a pioneer, Hume foresaw the day when Sydney and Melbourne would **be** the two great centres of Australian life. And, although Sydney was merely a hamlet, whilst Melbourne had not yet twitched in the protoplasm of historical evolution, he made it his ambition to carve a road through the jungle from the site of the one city to the site of the other. Begging permission to join the expedition, Hovell, an old sea captain, argued that, in scaling precipices and crossing flooded gorges, his nautical experience would come in handy. The event vindicated his contention. They took with them half a dozen convicts whose liberty was to be the reward of their success. A few horses and bullocks were carefully selected to haul the paraphernalia

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through hundreds of miles of unpenetrated wilderness. From that terrible trip not a bullock returned.

After two days they found their progress challenged by a river in tumultuous flood. Hume set his men to work to build boats, but the effort was a dismal failure. A more audacious experiment was tried. Removing the wheels from one of the waggons, they wrapped it in a tarpaulin. With a fishing line in his teeth, Boyd then swam the river. Cords were soon pulled across and ropes secured to both banks. Like a punt, the waterproof waggon was then drawn backwards and forwards, until it had conveyed the entire expedition, with all its baggage and belongings, across the swollen stream. It was on a bright November day that Hume made his most notable discovery. He invariably marched some distance ahead of the party. On that memorable morning the others noticed him, on a hilltop, exhibiting evident signs of excitement. He had seen, he said, the finest river on which his eyes had ever rested. They named it the Hume, although it afterwards came to be known as the Murray.

It was not all romance, however. As time passed, and difficulties multiplied, the subordinates became restless, if not actually mutinous. Hovell was for returning. The discontent became so general that Hume was compelled to promise that ~~if~~, from the summit of a peak then visible, the ocean to the south was not to be seen, -he would turn back. As a matter of fact, the sea is often discernible from that particular point; but, as luck would have it, it was not visible that day. They grimly named the hill Mt. Disappointment, and sorrowfully commenced the descent. Not to be thwarted, however, Hume pointed out another mountain-now named Macedon-and, almost with tears, begged his followers to try it. They grudgingly agreed, and climbing the trees that crowned the second eminence, clearly beheld the sea!

The real sensation was, however, still to come. Hume announced that, although they had carefully blazed the trail by which they had come, he did not propose to follow the same path on his return. Everybody was dumbfounded. Hovell bluntly averred that Hume was mad. But the result

amply justified the young leader's amazing decision. For, whereas the outward journey occupied two months, they returned by the new route in exactly half that time. And when, later on, the surveyors set to work to peg out a track for road and railways between Sydney and Melbourne, they could improve only in matters of minor detail on Hume's return route.

Hume's adventure richly deserves to be cherished in everlasting remembrance. Viewed in the cold perspective of an atlas, the shapeless lines that run like stray threads across the map—the lines that indicate the tortuous windings of our arterial highroads—look as prosaic as a proposition in Euclid. Yet those same Australian roads may one day move a laureate to an epic flight. For, properly appreciated, a road is a sacred place—one of the most sacred of all sacred places. And, for those who have eyes to see it, there stands, in the middle of every dusty road, an altar; and on that altar there has been offered a wondrous hecatomb of noble victims, a wealthy holocaust of sacrificial blood. The deaths of men like Burke and Wills and Grey and Poole, and Kennedy and Leichhardt and Baxter have imparted to every Australian highway a solemn sanctity. In the closing sentences of his immortal allegory, Bunyan stresses the fact that only those pilgrims who recognized the sublime significance of the Cross beside the road attained at last to the Celestial City. There is a sense in which the same is true of every road. They have all been hallowed by sacrifice; the feet of those who tramp along them are pressing consecrated ground. From the dust of the road those who have ears to hear may hear the glorious ghosts of the pioneers singing their deathless songs.

ECHOES OF YESTERYEAR

ON personal grounds alone, it would be a thousand pities if the name of Richard Baxter were to fade into oblivion. The older biographies of Baxter stressed the circumstance that he was a great divine; the later writers make it clear that he was a great human. He dearly loved his little joke; he had a keen eye for a pretty girl; he was very fond of a keenly contested and exciting game; he revelled in a good square meal. Baxter's love story is as dainty, as delicate and as beautiful as any such idyll in our literature.

On the eve of his departure for Scotland—a notable adventure in those days—Boswell consulted Johnson as to the books he should take with him. 'Tell me, sir,' he asked, 'which of Baxter's books should a man read?' 'Read any of them,' replied the doctor instantly, 'they are all good!' Baxter's young wife—he was old enough to be her father when he married her—would scarcely have concurred in Dr. Johnson's judgment. At least she would have insisted on adding a rider to the effect that, good as they were, they might have been very much better. For young Margaret, who was unconscionably proud of the dignified and stately scholar who worshipped the very ground she trod, was always telling him that he wrote far too much. 'She thought,' says Baxter, 'that I would have been wiser to have written fewer books and to have put better work into each of them.' Although she was little more than a girl, and had no training or experience that would qualify her as a critic in so profound a realm, she was indisputably right. Baxter says thousands of excellent things; but he does not say them attractively, while the passages that were written carefully and at leisure stand as ample vindication of Margaret's verdict.

The best instance of this is to be found in the Autobiography. 'Many years ago,' said Dean Stanley, in unveiling the beautiful

statue of Baxter that adorns the scene of his historic work at Kidderminster, 'many years *ago*, on one of the few occasions on which I had the pleasure of meeting Sir James Stephen, the famous professor of history at Cambridge University, he recommended me, with peculiar emphasis and solemnity, to read the two chapters with which Baxter closes the first section of his Autobiography. He begged me to do it at once; and, that very night, I followed his advice and have ever since publicly and privately advised other students to do the same.' In those two notable chapters, Baxter, writing in the mellow softness and measured calm of advancing age, contrasts his ideas in youth with his more mature outlook upon life now that his beard is turning grey. It is an amazing document, pitilessly penetrating and transparently honest, in which he spares himself no castigation and no self-exposure. If all his works had been conceived and executed on this lofty level, Dr. Johnson's counsel to Boswell would have been tinged with still greater fervour.

His father's ambition was that he should become a courtier, and, at the age of eighteen, he set out for Whitehall with a letter of introduction to Sir Henry Herbert, the Master of the Revels. A month at the court of King Charles the First sufficed to fill him with ineffable disgust; and, Christmas intervening, he set out for home. That winter was a phenomenal one. England was arctic; the roads were buried deep in frozen snow. Riding back to Shropshire, Baxter met a loaded waggon; and, to make room for it, spurred his horse up the bank. The horse slipped, the girths broke, and Baxter was thrown under the waggon. When the rim of the wheel was almost touching the skin of his forehead, the horses suddenly stopped. His miraculous escape powerfully impressed his mind, and he felt that his life, so marvellously preserved, should be devoted to some high end. His thoughts turned to the ministry.

His desire was granted him. He became a minister; and the noble statue, of which the people of Kidderminster are so justly proud, still testifies to the authority that, three centuries ago, he wielded in the town. A glance at the monument and

a casual perusal of his books, help us to appreciate the resistless appeal that he must have made to those who, actually looking into those flashing and eloquent eyes, capitulated unconditionally to the charm of his smile, the gentleness of his humour, the cogency of his reasoning and the force of his tense and virile personality. He became, in his own lifetime, a beautiful tradition.

But even if the Kidderminster episode be entirely eliminated, a colourful and dramatic pageant still remains. In 1665, the Plague year, Baxter was fifty. London was about as large a city as Adelaide is now. From eight to ten thousand people were dying in the metropolis every week. Burial was out of the question. The bodies were stacked up in the churchyards and in open places set apart for the purpose. The country was horrified and nobody went near London unless absolutely compelled by imperative necessity to do so. But Baxter went, and, like some ancient prophet risen from the dead, preached to the stricken people the vitalizing message that burned like a fire in his bones. When he heard the stories that were coming from across the Atlantic of the cruelties being afflicted by the Red Indians on the homes of the pioneer settlers, his first thought was of the transformation of the red men. Whilst everybody else was screaming for vengeance, Baxter pleaded that some steps should be taken for the evangelization and regeneration of the people of the wigwams. When he saw that his wife, although so much younger than himself, must predecease him, he wrote, as a gift to her, a hymn that now appears in the hymnaries of almost all the churches—'Lord, it belongs not to my care'-and, as a sign of her acceptance, she signed the manuscript. She died at forty-five; and he spent the ten lonely years that remained sighing for reunion with his lovely Margaret.

Chapter 34

EVOLUTION OF A SURGEON

AMONG the great surgeons of yesterday, there probably is none more honoured by the surgeons of today than John Hunter; yet how he became a surgeon nobody seems to know. Of degrees and diplomas he knew nothing. He became a surgeon by the simple process of practising surgery.

We catch our first glimpse of him as a red-headed, freckle-faced youngster driving his cows into the thatched farmhouse at Long Calderwood in Lanarkshire. He was the tenth child of his parents who secretly felt that the home was already a trifle overcrowded. **In** deciding on a vocation, they agreed that Johnnie **must** take pot luck. Willie and Jimmie had set their hearts on going to college; they could not indulge the **luxury of three scholars in the family. In due time, however,** Willie, Jimmie and Johnnie all became doctors, Johnnie the most **illustrious of the three.**

At seventeen, John forsook his cows at Calderwood for cabinet-making in Glasgow. Three years later, hearing of Willie's progress in his profession, John begged that he might be permitted to exercise his **craftsmanship** as a cabinet-maker in the dissection of human bodies in his **brother's** anatomical school.

William soon became convinced that John had a natural flair for all kinds of experiments upon the human frame; the youth quickly became popular with everybody about the place. He acquired special renown for the skill with which **he** beat down the prices of the resurrection men, obtaining the **ghastly trophies of their nocturnal raids on the churchyards at prices** at which such treasure had never been obtained **before.**

Recognizing that his young brother was a born surgeon, **William** advised him to pursue his studies along orthodox lines, and, at the age of twenty-seven, John went up to Oxford.

But, after a couple of months, he relinquished the project as just so much tomfoolery. 'How,' he demanded, 'will a headful of Greek roots and Latin conjugations help me to operate for popliteal aneurism?'

Later in life, when he was told that Jesse Foot had sneered at his ignorance of the dead languages, he retorted that he might not know much about dead languages, but he could teach things about dead bodies that Jesse Foot had never learned in any language, living or dead.

Always somewhat brusque and perhaps a trifle unmannerly, John Hunter lived to become the most eminent surgeon of his day. He was fifty-five when he bought the pretentious mansions in Leicester Square which, because of the array of splendid equipages always at his doors, earned for him the nickname of the Golden Calf of Leicester Square.

Mr. Ernest A. Gray, who has recently produced an excellent biography of Hunter, stresses the consistently practical side of the great man's work. He always sniffed at abstract theories. If in discussing a case with another surgeon, his companion said that he thought that this, that, or the other might be done, Hunter would snort: 'Why think? Let's try it!' He kept a huge menagerie of animals, birds, reptiles and fishes, and obtained the right to experiment upon the creatures in the various parks, shows, gardens and zoos. In testing the qualities of certain drugs he poisoned thousands of animals but he gained the knowledge for which he was groping.

He died very suddenly at the age of sixty-five, at the exact moment at which the unhappy Marie Antoinette was guillotined in Paris. In a heated argument with his colleagues, he slumped forward and was gone. He was buried in the vaults of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, and for a long time the exact place of his sepulture was unknown. Sixty-six years later, however, Frank Buckland, the eminent naturalist, who always regarded Hunter as 'the greatest of Englishmen', located the coffin, and with every pomp and circumstance, it was reinterred in Westminster Abbey.

With his passion for ocular demonstration and practical experiment, it was natural that John Hunter should have a

colossal and valuable collection of specimens. Within half a century of his death, Parliament voted about £50,000 for the acquisition and accommodation of his museum. Mr. Gray claims that his hero lifted surgery to a science. As long as the world lasts, he says, the burly shadow of John Hunter will fall athwart every operating theatre, hospital ward, and biological laboratory. It is a noble tribute, nobly earned.

THE LURE OF THE JUNGLE

ON September 20, 1771, a boy, destined to high renown, was born among the Scottish lowlands. Within walking distance, another boy, also marked for fame, was sprawling in his cradle. For that day was also the birthday of Mungo Park, the distinguished African explorer; his small neighbour, a few days older, is known to all the world as Sir Walter Scott.

As we peruse their biographies, we find them frequently in each other's company until that misty Autumn afternoon in 1805, about the time of the Battle of Trafalgar, when we see them riding through the heather to a spot at which they take farewell of each other for ever. For Park is setting out on his second expedition, the expedition from which he will never return.

Park's career is like a sandwich. There are the two expeditions to the Niger, with the eight years of medical practice at Peebles-the years of his closest intimacy with Sir Walter -in between. He stands in our annals as a pioneer of pioneers. He inaugurated a new era.

Europe was horrified by the loathsome reports concerning the African slave trade. Everybody felt that they should be investigated. Park was sent out. His **colourful** records of the immense **spaciousness** of the weird continent, together with his vivid **descriptions** of its gigantic fauna and its luxurious flora, captivated the imagination of the world. It kindled the enthusiasm, and directed the consecration of men 'like **Livingstone**. The startled nations rubbed their eyes and awoke to greet the new day, and the doors of the great closed land swung open to an imposing succession of pathfinders.

He plunged into Africa and the world forgot. Interest quickly evaporated. After daring a thousand deaths, he arrived back in London on Christmas Day, 1797. Nobody was at the station to welcome him.

It was a bitterly cold winter's morning. He had nowhere to go; people were too busy with the day's frolics and festivities to notice him. He sat shivering for a while in the gardens of the British Museum, when, strangely enough, his **brother-in-law**, James Dickson, 'unexpectedly coming to the gardens on some trifling business, was deeply moved to see there his **long-lost** friend, whom he had confidently numbered among the dead'. Thus ended one of the most momentous and fruitful expeditions of all time.

In Scotland once more, Park tried hard to settle down to a medical practice, but the lure of the jungle was too much for him. Africa was in his blood. In his walks and talks with Scott he could discuss no other theme. 'I tramp these hills with you in the daytime,' he once said to Sir Walter, 'but, as soon as I close my eyes at night, I am in Africa again.'

It seemed clear that his bones were never likely to rest quietly in any soil but **Africa's**.

Nothing about Park so impressed Scott as his amazing modesty. The *Travels* had been published in 1799; but, very often, in a burst of confidence, Park would narrate some adventure far more exciting than anything in his book. 'But, my dear fellow,' Scott would protest, 'why didn't you include that story in your manuscript?' But Park would only mutter something about 'nobody would have believed it' or 'he didn't care to brag'.

As the months passed, the mystery of the Niger became more maddening. What became of it? Did it join the Congo or empty itself into the sea? He would, he used to say, rather be drowned in the Niger than fail to solve that problem.

And so, whilst the world was fevered with Nelson and Trafalgar, he set off to Africa again. Arrived at the spot among the heather on which they had agreed to part, Scott and Park silently **clasped** hands. Park struck the spurs into his horse; Scott **watched** him till he was out of sight and then, sadly, returned to Ashestiel. Seven years later, the country heard with sorrow that Park had perished in the waters of his Niger.

A noble monument at Stirling commemorates one of the

knightliest figures in the annals of exploration. Tall, handsome and of charming manners, Park's audacious spirit, his indefatigable vigilance, his tireless activity, his calm fortitude, and his robust Christian faith have, as one of his biographers has said, been seldom equalled and never surpassed.

A BREAKER OF CHAINS

SOME men are extraordinarily fortunate in the hour of their appearance; the stage seems set for them. So was it with William Wilberforce, one of the most notable and picturesque social reformers of all time. It is scarcely too much to say that when he was born the Empire was born. The two sprang into existence simultaneously. 'Never,' says Green, 'had England played so great a part in the history of mankind as in 1759'—the year in which Wilberforce appeared. It was the age of Wolfe and Clive and Capt. Cook. Thackeray says that during those memorable months every Englishman was drunk with the intoxication of exciting news. In one crowded and epoch-making year, the civilizations alike of the East and of the West were entirely recast and remodelled. It was as if the world were being made all over again.

The child was scarcely out of his cradle when it was realized that he was not as other children are. Weak and puny from his birth, his parents were horrified at the discovery that his frame was stunted and misshapen. It is one of the marvels of history that the hand that struck the shackles from the galled limbs of our British slaves was the hand of a hunchback. From infancy he was an *elfish*, unsightly little figure. At the Grammar School at Hull the other boys would lift his tiny twisted form on to the table and make him go through all his impish tricks. For, despite his deformity, he was amazingly sprightly, resourceful and clever. A master of mimicry, a born actor, an accomplished singer and a perfect elocutionist, he was as agile also as a monkey and as full of mischief. Every day he added to his repertoire some new antics. His schoolfellows and his teachers were invariably convulsed by the whimsical audacity of each new turn.

Wilberforce is the most striking illustration that history can offer of a grotesque and insignificant form glorified by its

consecration to an illustrious and noble cause. Recognizing the terrible **handicap** that Nature had so harshly imposed upon him, he set himself to redress the balance by acquiring a singular graciousness and charm of manner. As a result, his courtliness became proverbial. It was said of him that if you saw him in conversation with a man, you would suppose that the man was his brother, or, if with a woman, that he was her lover. He compelled men to forget his unshapely limbs. The splendour of his intellect eclipsed the ugliness of his body.

This extraordinary triumph was due in large measure to **the** purity of the cause that he espoused. On a day memorable in our annals, two young men—Wilberforce and Pitt—lay sprawling on the grass under a grand old oak tree in the beautiful park at Holwood in Kent. A solid stone seat now stands beside the tree, bearing an inscription explaining that it was there that the two youths solemnly dedicated their powers to the task of abolishing slavery. Few of us realize **the** immense proportions that the British slave trade had then assumed. During the eighteenth century nearly a million blacks were transported from Africa—with much less consideration than would have been shown to cattle—to Jamaica alone. From his earliest infancy, the horror of the **traffic** preyed upon the sensitive mind of William Wilberforce. For fifty years he never rested. Through evil report and through good, he tirelessly pursued his ideal. At times the opposition seemed insuperable. But Pitt stood by him; the Quakers and a few others encouraged him to persist. Mr. Wesley, in his last hours of consciousness, wrote from his deathbed begging him never to give up.

After twenty years of incessant struggle, it was enacted that the export of slaves from Africa should cease, but no relief was offered to those already in bondage. A quarter of a century later, as Wilberforce lay dying, messengers from Westminster entered his sickroom to tell him that, at last, the Emancipation Bill had been passed. The slaves were free! 'Thank God,' exclaimed the **expiring** dwarf, 'that I have lived to see this day!' Like Wolfe at Quebec, like Nelson at

Trafalgar, and like Sir John Franklin amidst Arctic snows, he died in the flush of triumph. His vivid fancy had involved him in all the tortures that oppressed the slaves, but he passed away rejoicing that their fetters were broken and gone.

The record of William Wilberforce presents us with the paramount example of a man, **crucially** handicapped, bearing down all opposition, and surmounting all difficulties by the sheer force of his own unselfish passion. His transparent sincerity transfigured him. When he rose to address the House of Commons, he looked like a dwarf that had jumped out of a fairy-tale. When he resumed his seat he looked like the giant of the self-same story. His hearers declared that his face, when pleading for the slave, was positively seraphic: it resembled the face of an angel. The repulsiveness of his little frame seemed to disappear; and, under the magic of his inspired eloquence, his form became sublime. His death evoked a tribute that is without parallel. He was borne to his resting-place in the Abbey by the Peers and Commoners of England with the Lord Chancellor at their head. In imperishable marble it was recorded of him that he had ren loved from England the guilt of the slave trade and prepared the way for the abolition of slavery in every part of the world. In freeing the slaves he established the vital principle of the **spiritual** equality of man, and thus, unconsciously, he laid the **founda-**tions of our modern democracy. The people who mourned his passing may not have recognized this. They only knew that they had **lost** one who had served his generation with sublime devotion and with dramatic effect. And it is on record that, as the **cortège** made its **sombre** way through the crowded streets, all London was in tears, and one person in every three was garbed in deepest black.

WATERSHED OF THE YEAR

WE set out today on the second half of the year. We stand midway between the beginning and the end. The position is emblematic of some of life's most poignant experiences and most perplexing problems. The crucial test invariably comes halfway. It is easy to embark on a long journey; one's vitality is fresh and one's senses keen. It is easy to finish the tramp; the excitement of having reached one's goal dispels all consciousness of weariness. But what of the intermediate stage? What of the hours through which no applauding voices from behind encouraged and no fingers beckoned ahead? It is the central span that tries the mettle of the man. A student undertakes his course with a light heart. As he nears the time for his final examination he finds concentration easy; it is halfway between these two exciting experiences that he is most tempted to relax.

William Wilberforce used to say that he felt dared and inspired by the antagonism that greeted his initiation of the movement for the emancipation of the slaves. But he was almost paralysed by the long lull that followed when the country accepted his principles but did nothing to hasten their realization. The beginning was stimulating and the end was glorious, but the road between was a continual crucifixion. As it is with great causes, so it is with individuals. There is no intellectual luxury so intoxicating as the **formation** of a noble purpose, the adoption of a sudden resolve, the making of a momentous decision. But what of the dogged fight that must inevitably follow? In telling the story of that terrible **conflict** with temptations and difficulties which at times seemed insuperable, Mark Rutherford tells us repeatedly that it was the halfway stage that nearly defeated him. 'Neither the first step nor the last,' he says, 'was the **difficult** step with me; it was what lay between.' The January phase of an enterprise

is usually helped by the novelty of a new beginning. The December phase is illumined by the prospect of a triumphant close; it is the July phase that demands the highest courage.

All this applies with special force to middle-life. Middle-life is an isolated and distinct phase of human experience. It is out of touch both with youth and with old-age. It has a temper of its own, a mood of its own, a method of its own, and, therefore, a peril of its own. 'Middle-life,' as Sir J. R. Seeley says, 'tends continually to routine, to the mechanical tracing of a contracted circle. A man finds or fancies that the care of his own family is as much as he can undertake, and excuses himself from most of his duties to humanity. How many a man who, at twenty, was full of zeal, and of high-minded designs and plans of a life devoted to the public good, changes radically with the years!' Sir John adds that, after the cares of middle-life have come upon a man, and one or two schemes, contrived with the inexperience of youth have failed, he retains nothing of the enthusiasm with which he set out but a willingness to relieve distress whenever it crosses his path, and perhaps a habit of devoting an annual sum of money to charitable purposes.

The outstanding tendency of middle-age is towards prosiness. Young people write poetry and get sentimental; so do old people. But middle-aged people seldom betray such frailties. A middle-aged man would as soon be suspected of picking his neighbour's pocket as of writing an ode or a sonnet. He would rather be seen walking down the street without collar or necktie than be seen shedding tears. The romance of youth has worn off; the romance of age has not arrived. He is between the poetry of the dawn and the poetry of the twilight. Midway between sunrise and sunset, like July remotely poised between the glamour of a Christmas far behind and the glamour of a Christmas far ahead, comes the panting perspiration of noon. Youth is wildly romantic; middle-age is severely practical. Youth is impulsive; middle-age is cautious. Youth is capable of passionate enthusiasms and counts the cost too little; middle-age is stolid, cannot be swept off its feet, and counts the cost too long.

Schiller argued from all this that man becomes less spiritual in the central span of life. The animal nature, he maintained, dominates the more generous qualities with the result that the least excellent ingredients of our humanity prevail. New-man held nearly the same view. In early life, he pointed out, a man finds it easy to be unselfish and will, under the spell of some vehement impulse, fling the whole world away and count that world well lost. But in middle-life, the Cardinal added, material interests inevitably submerge a man's entire nature into selfish indifference towards everything with which self is not concerned, unless those interests are subdued by high religious and moral principles.

The explanation is simple. When a man reaches the July stage of life-the realm of middle-age-he feels that he must drop something. Having been all his life accumulating, he has become seriously overloaded. He has maintained his interest in all the things that engrossed his youth, whilst, all the way along the road, fresh claims have been made upon him. His position in the world is a much more responsible one. It makes a greater drain upon his thought and energy. He has married, too, and children have come into his home. There has been struggle and sickness and anxiety. Interests have multiplied and life has increased in seriousness. And the inevitable danger is that, becoming more serious, it will consequently become more sordid. Under the pressure of life's complexity, he is compelled to drop something, and, unless he is particularly careful, he will drop the best. Is that why one of those old Hebrew prophets, who always seem to say the last word on every human problem, prayed that his choicest qualities-faith and hope and charity-might be awakened to fresh activity in middle-life? 'O Lord,' he cried, 'revive Thy work in the midst of the years: in the midst of the years make Thyself known!' It is a suggestion that those in the July phase of human experience may pleasantly and profitably ponder.

THE WAKE OF A HURRICANE

IT is interesting to inquire on this, the anniversary of his birth, as to the effect of the years on the enormous vogue of G. K. Chesterton. A cyclonic disturbance swept the purlieus of Fleet Street when Mr. Chesterton's immense shadow was first cast upon those classical pavements. Then, for a few memorable years, his titanic personality dominated the entire situation. No figure in London was more readily recognized than his. Even those who had not actually gazed upon his gigantic form, or heard the reverberating thunders of his stentorian voice, seemed strangely familiar with the features of which they had read so much.

In contemplating his work and his renown at this distance, one circumstance strikes us as extraordinary. Chesterton died at sixty-two. It is an age at which many eminent *littérateurs* have left us. But if, in the case of almost any other man, the sixty-two years be divided into two periods of thirty-one years each, we see at a glance that the first period was a period of preparation, whilst the second was the period of achievement. With Mr. Chesterton it was quite otherwise. His most brilliant work was executed whilst the dew of his youth was still upon him. In the second half of his life he produced no volumes more startling, more original or more provocative than those which he published in the early days of his career. He was a veritable whirlwind. He broke upon a gasping world with almost terrifying abruptness. He electrified his generation. He seemed to have entered violently the sedate precincts of London journalism without having rung the bell, knocked at the door, or given any other signal of his approach. He established his great fame so swiftly that, whilst he was still in the twenties and thirties, books were being written about him.

During those amazing and youthful years Chesterton

seemed to produce his sparkling and scintillating volumes by some occult system of legerdemain. They sprang up at his command as if by magic. He waved his hand, and there they were! They were no trouble to him. He appeared to throw his massive form upon his bed at midnight, and, when he rose in the morning, the finished manuscript lay waiting for him on his dressing table. Each, in its turn, seemed to eclipse and outshine all its predecessors. Each, in its turn, set everybody laughing, set everybody thinking, and set everybody quoting. Few writers were more impressive, for he made everybody feel that, with all his intellectual acrobatics, with all his passion for paradox and with all his delicious nonsense, he was in **deadly** earnest. **If**, on the other hand, he was a clever clown, he was, on the other, an inspired prophet.

His vogue was tremendous. When, in those days, a man received from his bookseller his copy of his favourite magazine, he began its perusal by glancing at the index to see if it contained anything from the pen of Mr. Chesterton. If it did, everything else had to wait until the galvanic thrills of those magnetic pages had been enjoyed to the full. **Chesterton's** palpitating paragraphs were certain to be packed with haunting **epigrams**, glittering self-contradictions, daring witticisms, droll and pungent **humour**, shrewd philosophy, acute criticism and quaint observations concerning everything and everybody. For Chesterton was always Chesterton. In his **Prophets, Priests** and Kings, A. G. Gardiner refers to him as one of the most mountainous objects on the horizon of that time. Towering like a colossus against the skyline of his period, he, in more senses than one, dwarfed all his colleagues and contemporaries. Those who **applauded** him, those who differed from him, and those who, **dazzled** by the confusing glare of his luminous genius, could make neither head nor tail of him, all agreed that, whatever he was and whatever he was not, he was at any rate a superlative oddity, a dynamic authority and a despotic personality.

Chesterton was big enough to think his own thoughts, and it was in his nature, having thought them, to like them. They were his children, born of his own brain, and he looked upon

them with the affection and pride of a doting parent. He revelled in pushing them to the front, in attracting attention to their virtues and in seeing them secure the recognition that they deserved. He really loved them; regarded them as bone of his bone, and was ready, if need be, to die in their defence. He poured the vital essence of his own being, the hissing tincture of his own personality, into every syllable that he penned. Herein lies the secret. It may be argued that the work of an author, and his work alone, will determine his place in the ultimate judgment of mankind, he himself remaining an invisible and inconsiderable nonentity. Chesterton's record proves that the man and his work are indivisible.

Like Pitt and Macaulay, he never grew. All three were at their golden best at twenty-five; neither lost the intellectual splendour that he then commanded: but neither made the slightest advance upon it. In the course of the years, Chesterton gave us books that were as good as his prentice efforts: but he gave us none better. With characteristic shrewdness and sagacity, he lapsed into silence for long periods. He liked to write, not because he had to say something, but because he had something to say. He held that it is far better for a man to lay down his pen while there is still a drop of ink on the nib than to go on scratching long after the point has become dry. With prophetic insight, he detected a shining sublimity in the drabest commonplace.

Such men, as Blake would say, see a world in a grain of sand and heaven in a wild flower, hold infinity in the palm of their hand and eternity in an hour. Men of such virility, and of such vision, are not soon forgotten.

THE ETHICS OF LEISURE

NOBODY likes a book that is printed to the utmost extremity of every page. We love a margin. We somehow feel that the marginless volume is an outrage on human nature.

It is, indeed, an outrage on Nature herself, for Nature specializes in margins. She wants a bird, so a dozen are hatched. She knows perfectly well that eleven out of the twelve are merely margin. She will toss them to the cats and the foxes and the weasels and the snakes, reserving to herself the best of the batch. She wants a tree, so she plants a hundred. Ninety-nine are mere margin; but she wants to make sure of one.

It is the margin that makes all the difference. If the work that must be done occupies every waking moment of a man's time, he is a slave; if it leaves him a reasonable margin, he is in clover. If his receipts will only just balance his expenditure, he is living a mere hand-to-mouth existence; if, on the contrary, they leave him a margin, he jingles the surplus coins in his pocket with the pride of a prince.

Mr. Micawber's philosophy hits the situation off with precision. 'Annual income—£20; annual expenditure—£200s. 6a. ; result-misery! Annual income—£20; annual expenditure—&o 19s. 6d.; result-happiness!' In point of fact, this matter of the margin touches the financial issue very closely. The way in which a people spends its money represents the crucial test of national character. But it is not always along the main line of expenditure that the revelation is made.

The principal items of expenditure, being inevitable, are beyond the control of the individual. A man must eat and drink and wear clothes, whether he be a burglar or a bishop. But after a man has provided himself with the stern necessities of life, then comes the test. What of the margin? It is in the expenditure of that margin of money that the real man

will reveal himself. It is the use or abuse of that margin that declares his true character and that determines the contribution that he, as an individual citizen, will make to the national weal or woe.

In the same way, there is a section of time that remains to a man after the main business of life has been dealt with. It is the use to which that margin is put that betrays the inherent propensities of the individual, and that, in the long run, determines the destiny of the nation. There, let us suppose, are two bricklayers. From the time that the hour strikes for them to commence operations until the time comes to lay aside their trowels for the day, they very closely resemble each other. The one may be a philosopher and the other a scoundrel; but these traits will find small opportunity of expressing themselves as they chip away at the bricks and spread the mortar. The intellectual proclivities of the one and the vicious propensities of the other will be held in the severest restraint as they labour side by side.

But the moment that the tools are tossed aside, the character of each man stands revealed. He is his own master. Like a hound unleashed, he can now follow his particular bent without let or hindrance. It is during his margin of leisure that the one, by developing his best self, will increase the value of his citizenship; and it is during that immunity from industrial repression that the other will compass his own deterioration and exert his influence for the general impoverishment.

Obviously, therefore, the matter of the margin is, first and foremost, a matter of morals. Concerning the expenditure of the hours occupied with labour, and concerning the money spent on the actual requisites of life, the statesman may have something to say. Legislation may deal with the hours of toil and the rate of wages. It may even influence the precise amount of the butcher's and the baker's bills. But when it comes to the hours that follow labour, and to the cash that remains after the principal accounts have been paid, the legislator finds himself out of his depth. He has come to the end of his tether. He cannot direct the people how to spend their

spare time and their spare cash. Yet, as we have seen, it is this margin of hours and of money that determines everything.

It is clear from all this that, important as are the functions of statesmanship, they have their limits and those limits are rigidly defined. The really fundamental elements of individual conduct and national life are not to be controlled by Act of Parliament. They elude the most searching enactments of the most vigilant legislators. As the hours of labour contract, and as the margin of spare cash increases, the authority of the legislator becomes smaller and smaller, and the imperative need for some force that shall shape the conscience and behaviour of the people becomes greater and greater. Here is a mystic realm that defies anything that savours of coercion from without, and that is only susceptible to persuasion from within.

Therein lies the challenge that must awaken anxious thought in the minds of those who are charged with the moral and spiritual guidance of the populace. The Church claims to be the custodian of a secret that can meet that challenge. She possesses an evangelistic and transfiguring gospel that can appeal to the inmost instincts and motives of humanity, making bad men good and good men better. If, in virtue of such sublime prerogatives, she fails to mould men's inner lives and make herself the mistress of the margin, the outlook is by no means reassuring.

RETURN OF THE SWALLOW

THE swallows are back! Their arrival is always one of the gladnesses of the year. We are reminded of Kingsley's old gamekeeper at Allfowlsness—'as good an old Scotsman as ever knit stockings on a winter's night'. He lived all alone upon the Ness, in a turf hut thatched with heather and fringed round with great stones slung across the roof with ropes lest the winter gales should blow the hut away. On the day on which the birds left on their annual flight, he stood bare-headed, waving his cap to them and wishing them a merry journey. Then, settling down by his big log fire, he read his Bible and knitted his stockings till the birds came back. And the great day of his long year was the sunny Spring day on which he welcomed them.

The pleasure of seeing the swallows return is one of those primal and basic joys that weave all the ages into a common web. Some time ago a Greek lad, George Demetrios by name, left his native land and settled in Boston. He had been reared in Macedonia, not far from Mount Olympus. After spending some years in America, he wrote a book entitled, *When I Was a Boy in Greece*.

Among other things he tells how, with other Greek boys, he celebrated the return of spring: We went from house to house, he says, with a carved wooden swallow at the end of a stick and sang the song that Sappho herself may have heard—

**She is here! She is here!
The swallow that brings in the beautiful year!
Throw open the door! Throw open the door!
We are children again; we are old no more!**

The pleasure that we feel, therefore, when we watch the swallows skimming hither and thither in the spring-time is a

pleasure that we share with all the world and all the ages. Plato smiled as he greeted his first swallow every year: Paul saw the swallows just as, and just where, Demetrios saw them: the swallows link us with all the men and women who have ever lived, or ever will live: and half the ecstasy that we feel is rooted in the sense of fellowship, communion, fraternity that is so subtly suggested.

Of late years a good deal of attention has been devoted to the wandering habits of migratory birds and some particularly interesting facts have been elicited. But we were late in waking up to the fact that these feathered gipsies bear mystic messages from land to land. Had we opened our eyes a little earlier, the entire history of our civilization would have had to be very differently told. One of the greatest military disasters of all time, for example, was Napoleon's loss of his enormous army in the course of his tragic retreat from Moscow.

But Frank Buckland, the eminent naturalist, has pointed out that Napoleon led his battalions to destruction in defiance of the clearest and most eloquent warnings. 'For,' Buckland says, 'if Napoleon had condescended to observe the flights of storks and of cranes passing over his fated regiments, subsequent events in the politics of Europe might have been very different. Those storks and cranes, knowing of the approach of a deadly winter, were winging their way to the south with all speed: Napoleon rashly hurried his armies into the frigid latitudes that the birds were leaving.' Thus was precipitated the catastrophe from which the tyrant never recovered.

Why does the swallow migrate? How do the birds know when to turn their faces to the ocean? How do they know in which direction to go? Nobody knows; and, what is more, the swallow does not know. If we are inclined to marvel at this mystery, it may intrigue us to turn our eyes inward in order to discover that we ourselves behave very much as the swallow does. We act without knowing why we act. We move through life guided by a force that we cannot explain. By what strange impulse is a man moved to follow a particular profession—that and no other? By what freak of fate does

he marry a particular woman—this and no other? By what stroke of fortune does he settle in a particular country or city or town? Looking back on life, it seems almost like a drift: we seemed to have reached our ultimate position by the veriest chance. Yet few men would be prepared to recognize chance as the dominant factor in their lives. Like the swallow's **flight** it has turned out too well to be attributed to the mere accident of circumstance.

The fact is, of course, that the swallow knows instinctively when and where to go. But what is instinct? And to what extent are we ourselves piloted through life's maze of confusion by the same subtle and indefinable force? Browning makes Paracelsus cry

I see my way as birds their trackless way.
I shall arrive! what time, what circuit first,
I ask not; but unless God send his hail
Or blinding fireballs, sleet or stifling snow,
In some time, his good time, I shall arrive:
He guides me and the bird. In his good time!

And what of the greatest of all our migratory **instincts**—the instinct of immortality? For, after all, the sense of immortality is essentially an instinct and not an argument. Nobody can prove it; yet there are millions who, unable to prove it, nevertheless feel it. And, as the swallow's instinct guides it across uncharted seas, so it guides them among the shocks and surprises of existence.

There must be multitudes who, unable to reason out the logic of the invisible, will pillow their heads on the great hope that the **flight** of the swallows affords. 'Beautiful swallows!' Richard Jefferies, the naturalist, fondly exclaims, 'they symbolize all that is best in Nature and all that is best in our own hearts!' That being so, it is little wonder that we feel a peculiar rapture in greeting the birds again.